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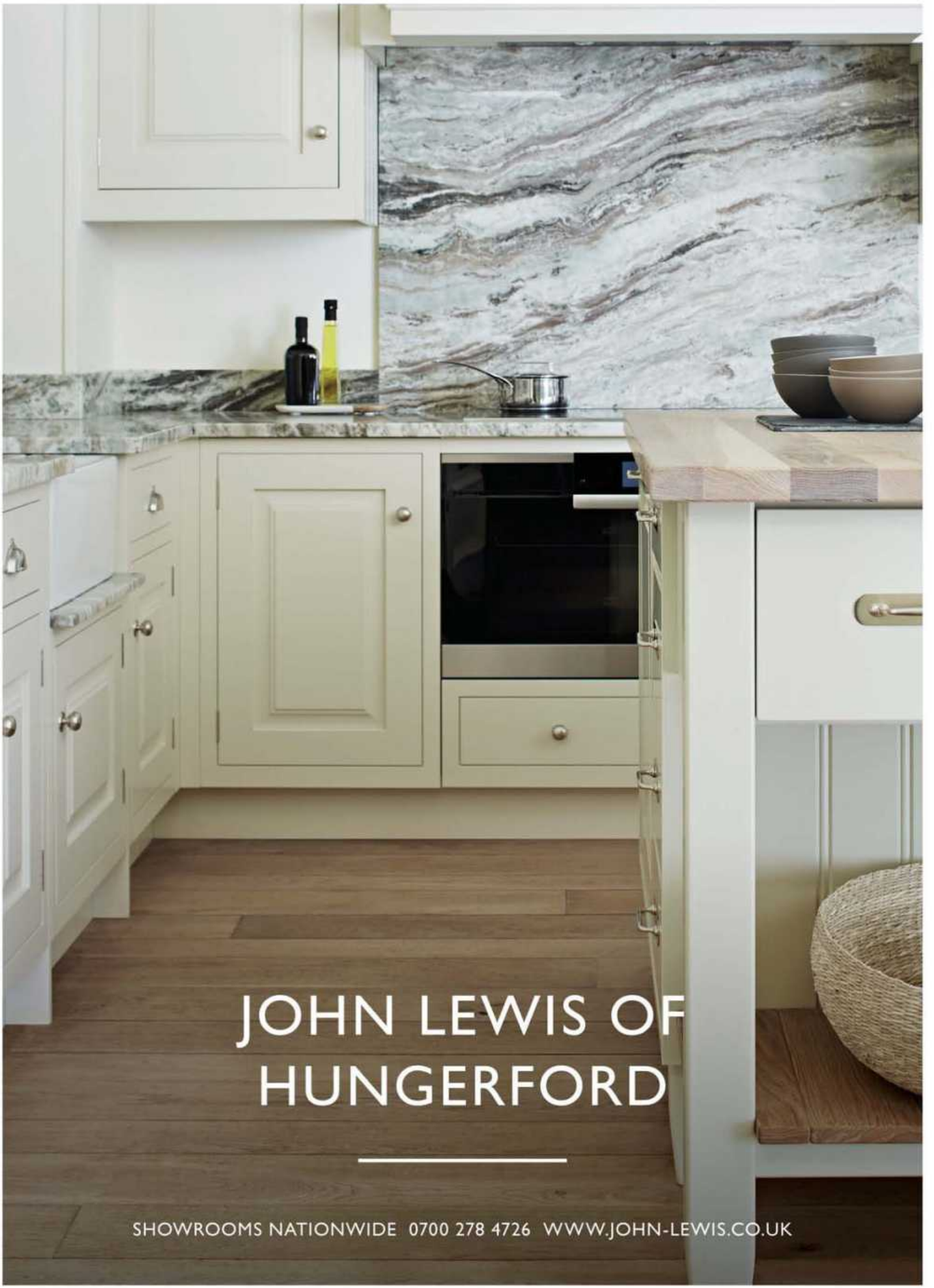
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EDITOR'S LETTER



Flower POWER

Eye-catching, pretty florals amd grown-up pinks are the way forward this season. I've got my eye on the Harper Collection at Marks and Spencer. **0333 014 8000 marksandspencer.com**



April is a special month, full of movement and potential. According to Shakespeare 'proud pied April' puts a 'spirit of youth in every thing' so this month, we can bring a playful and charming spirit to our interiors. Turn to page 71 to discover a relaxed take on blues and whites and be inspired by some glorious greens to suit you. As well as some gorgeous real homes and gardens from p32, we celebrate the zeitgeist of the Victorian era and its impact on the world of interiors from p93.

Wishing you a happy Easter and a joyous approach to your home.

Susan Dickerson
EDITOR

This month Period Ideas has been: **DELIGHTED** *by sneak previews of fresh and romantic florals;* **ENJOYING** *Arne Maynard's theatrical approach to garden design;* **GETTING EXCITED** *about interiors shows for spring;* **PLANNING** *an adventure in the New Forest;* **TACKLING** *the mother of all spring cleans and* **LOOKING FORWARD** *to Botticelli: Reimagined at the V&A, which opens on 5 March*

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SEE PAGE 123 TO SUBSCRIBE TODAY

Pay just £6 for your first three issues of *Period Ideas* with free delivery direct to your door. Classic inspiration for your home and garden all year long.

APRIL'S ESSENTIAL SHOPPING LIST

HOME STYLE

Keep up to date with the latest designs and happenings this month

TAKE THE CHAIR

Get the garden party look with a child-sized willow arm chair, £89. An ideal size for most pets as well, it also makes a great hiding place in an Easter egg hunt!
01925 767 611, marquisanddawe.co.uk





ROLL WITH IT

Make sure your pastries and biscuits look as good as they taste, with this set of 3 patterned rolling pins. Ideal for big kids and small, and perfect for an Easter party. Priced £26 per set, plus shipping. ***dawanda.com***



MAGICAL LAMP

Make sure your lighting choice is in line with the woodland trend with this statement lamp from Rume, priced £344. **01273 777 810, rume.co.uk**



IN BLOOM

Show off your best spring flowers with this gorgeous globe vase. With a hand-painted sheer finish, it'll look stunning in the summer too and costs £14.95.
03455 480 210, annabeljames.co.uk



CELEBRATE IN STYLE

The pheasant picnic bag and blanket set from Sophie Allport adds a touch of charm to al fresco dining. The bag costs £32, and the blanket is £35.
01778 560 256, sophieallport.com

DINE OUT

Make the most of the warmer weather with the Oslo folding bistro set from Dobbies. It's perfect for meals in the garden, or for early season trips to the great outdoors. Priced at £109. **0131 561 6406, dobbies.com**



TICK TOCK

You'll enjoy clock-watching with this woodpecker design perched on your wall. It really brings the forest to your front room and costs £87.
0121 224 7728, redcandy.co.uk



HARE & FLAIR

Looking to add some originality to your Easter décor choices? Look no further than the Splatter Hare cushion. This Easter bunny has just the right amount of attitude, and is available from £21.95.
01612 210 109, wraptious.com



DIARY DATE

April 23rd marks 400 years since the death of William Shakespeare, and Shakespeare's Globe is inviting the world to join the Complete Walk. The Walk is set along the banks of the River Thames, on a 2.5 mile route between Westminster and Tower Bridge. There will be 37 screens showing specially-made short films celebrating the playwright's life and work. For one weekend in London, all the world really is a stage. To find out more call ***020 7902 1400*** *or visit* ***shakespearesglobe.com***



SCANDI STYLE

The Haltiatar collection at Vallila is perfect for the late spring and early summer. The original floral design is available on a range of home accessories, including mugs, oven mitts and aprons. For more information visit the website, **vallilainterior.fi/en**

Decorating with...

FRENCH FLAIR

Soft, romantic and feminine, a Gallic scheme will add alluring appeal to your home

Edited by **CHARLOTTE BARBER**



Palais Avenue, king size upholstered bed, from £1,795, bedside table £265, The French Bedroom Company, **01444 415 430, frenchbedroomcompany.co.uk**

With the summer months just around the corner, what better way to celebrate the season than by creating your own 'holiday at home' vibe for the ultimate, escapist feel? Now is the perfect time to take your cue from the laid-back look of French interior design and embrace its faded grandeur glory. Your first step is to create a white-washed backdrop of neutral tones teamed with sugared almond shades. Distressed paint finishes and chalky matt emulsions will effortlessly combine with a palette of soft grey, dusky pink, muted green and pale lavender.

In terms of window dressings, shutters are a classic choice, either in a stained wood or painted plain white. Sheer blinds work well too, but curtains must be kept lightweight in order to maximise the sense of air and space. Upholstery and soft furnishings should be simple and unfussy; natural fibres and loose weaves work best with neutral linens, bleached cottons and tactile silks all being a perfect choice. Set the scene with organic materials – stone floors, terracotta tiles and exposed brickwork exude a relaxed, rustic feel and floral carvings and scallop detailing on furniture add a whimsical touch.

Continental cooking and entertaining is all about sun-soaked flavours, so embrace the key elements of Mediterranean fare and display pots of fresh herbs, jars of olives, strings of garlic and bowls of lemons in your kitchen. Showcase copper pans, enamelware, ceramic jugs and rustic tableware for authentic appeal and keep in mind that free-standing furniture is a must, so go for a butcher's block and a stand-alone dresser in your space. A ceramic sink and wooden plate and wine racks are key elements, too, and when it comes to illuminating your space, choose lantern-style pendants for rural charm in your cook zone.

Swatch WATCH

Blush tones work beautifully with off-whites and creams for a romantic scheme.
01383 740 011, craigandrose.com

Fresh Plaster

Dried Plaster

Parlour Cream

Ecru

Rich Gold

CHIC AND UNIQUE



Georgia Metcalfe, Director and Founder of The French Bedroom Company explains the timeless appeal of French style

"There's something so unashamedly feminine about French furniture: the curves, the soft colours, sumptuous fabrics (silks, velvets and damasks) and the carved embellishments. French designs really add a stamp of quality and design 'know-how' to a room. If you've not used French pieces in your home before, start gently - add a French chandelier and then perhaps a chair, and then make your bedroom into a glorious relaxing boudoir by adding a French bed."

Chablis & Roses pink velvet sofa, £1,120 for a two-seater, £1,320 for a three-seater chesterfield, The French Bedroom Company

PARISIAN DESIGN *rules*

Embrace city chic for a glamorous style statement in your home

- French interiors don't have to be rustic. If you'd rather have an urban vibe, channel Parisian style, which is all about mixing old with new. Paris' famous flea markets line the streets and are a popular treasure trove for finding unusual curiosities.
- Highlight architectural details such as moulding, panelling and polished wood floors and keep walls white with one or two accent colours in black, grey, red or French blue. A statement item of furniture (such as Philippe Starck's cult classic Ghost chair) will bring a contemporary nod to your scheme.
- Lacquered and mirrored finishes will set the tone together with gilt-framed mirrors and paintings. Opulent fabrics in rich brocade, satin and crêpe will create fashionable feel and don't forget to add patterned rugs underfoot for tactile and textured appeal.



Sacre coeur, king-sized pink velvet bed, £1,980, The French Bedroom Company

Online Inspiration

We've compiled our most inspirational paint ideas and colour schemes in our moodboards, head to **pinterest.com/periodideas** to take a look.

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Wolverhampton 01902 874200 | **Worcester** 01905 355408 | **Worthing** 01903 201901 | **York** 01904 479792

Great British Kitchens



Hare pencil sketch cushion, £14.99; artificial Narcissi in brown bags, £3.99; all Dobbies Garden Centres. **0131 561 6406, dobbies.com**

Site to see

The RHS London Spring Plant Extravaganza, featuring the eagerly-anticipated Orchid Show (taking place 1st – 2nd April), is set to be a feast for the eyes. With countless stands displaying spring wares and a full programme of talks, it's a must-see for all flower lovers. The Orchid Show features displays from professional growers, orchid societies and botanical gardens from around the world and it'll also be a chance to see exciting new species. Tickets are priced from £6. For more information visit ***rhs.org.uk***



Bloom of the month TULIP

Boasting simple blooms in a variety of bold colours, the humble tulip has a rich heritage with its roots in Central Asia. It is easy to grow outdoors, and also ideal for a showy table arrangement indoors, these spring-blooming perennials are grown from bulbs, which are best to plant in the autumn (later than most bulbs) for a show of flowers. Blooming from March–May, tulips like full sun and well-drained soil; just be sure to shelter from strong winds and avoid very wet or boggy areas. Although tulips are often seen as a perfect bedding plant, keep in mind that they are also superb for containers on the patio. Pashley Manor Gardens (former home to the Boleyns) hosts its annual Tulip Festival where over 30,000 tulips and 100 different varieties can be seen in all their glory.

Out and about

For a burst of spring colour, head to the spectacular gardens at Hever Castle, Kent. Set in 125 acres, the grounds of this 14th century moated castle boast an array of spring blooms including sunny daffodils, elegant tulips and a stunning backdrop of camellias which have been trained against walls of the charming Italian garden. These award-winning gardens also have plenty to entertain the youngsters – a giant topiary chess set and endless cascades, grottoes and fountains will all be popular attractions.

Find out more by clicking on hevercastle.co.uk

Seasonal shopping Garden Journal

The latest news, inspirational ideas and expert advice for your great outdoors

SEASON'S BOUNTY

We all know that April showers bring May flowers, so what better way to kick off the growing season than with a full day's workshop at The Eden Project, learning all about seed propagation?

Perfect for keen amateurs, the Eden gardeners will take you step-by-step through all the principles and practices of growing plants from seed, sowing in both containers and outdoors. You can even sign up for the full eight days and get a qualification in Practical Horticulture upon completion. The Seed Propagation course takes place on 16th April at The Eden Project, Cornwall. It costs £50 per person, with a discount for members. For more information, and to browse their full list of courses, visit **edenproject.com or call 01726 811 911.**



Colour code

If you're keen to add a pop of colour in your outdoor space, your first port of call should be the exciting range of garden paints from trusted wood care specialists, Ronseal. Not only are there 24 tempting shades to choose from (Daisy is shown here), but you can rest assured that two coats will provide a weather-proof finish for all kinds of materials including wood, metal, terracotta, brick and stone. Rainproof in just 60 minutes, it's just the ticket for handling April's changeable weather. Priced from £21 for 2.5l, **ronseal.co.uk**

RETAIL THERAPY

Now that spring has sprung, it's time to spruce up your outdoor space for the warmer months ahead



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GREEN FINGERS
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HAND IN GLOVE
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GET CRACKING
Put all your eggs in one basket and display this pastel wreath for seasonal appeal, £24, from The Contemporary Home. **02392 469 400, tch.net**



PERFECT PAIR
Brighten up your table with these beautifully boxed tulip mugs from Emma Bridgewater, £39.95. **01769 579 077, daisypark.co.uk**



SPLASH OF COLOUR
There might be raindrops outside, but be sure to keep house plants watered with this indoor watering can, £14.95. **0345 548 0210, annabeljames.co.uk**



EXPERT ADVICE

BRANCHING *Out*

Editor of Grow Your Own magazine, Laura Hillier, shares her specialist knowledge

Laura Hillier is Editor of *Grow Your Own* magazine. For more growing tips and ideas pick up the April issue of *GYO*, on sale 4 March with free courgette, celery, leek and broccoli seeds



April is a favourite month for many growers. We are busy with plenty of spring sowings, but are also seeing the fruits of our earlier labours burst into life. There are green shoots as far as the eye can see, and that (along with those first beautiful rays of warm sunshine) make this a time to really enjoy on the allotment plot or in the garden.

As well as making sowings of everything from courgettes, peppers, tomatoes, cucumber, aubergines and salad crops (to name but a few), now is also a great time to get prepared for the coming months, by making supports for climbing crops, such as beans. These can be as simple, or as elaborate as you like, and are commonly made from bamboo canes or coppiced branches. These are traditionally set in rows, or a wigwam style, dependent on the space available and the layout of your plot.

Potatoes are another crop to give your attention to in April – chitting and planting out second earlies, specifically. Place your seed potatoes in an old egg box and wait for the chits (the sprouting shoots) to appear. Once you have approximately three strong shoots, rub the rest off, and plant the tuber in prepared soil or in your chosen container.


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GARDEN GOSSIP

Sarah Raven



The queen bee of the British gardening scene plants sunflowers and brassicas

I have two favourite sunflowers – the small-flowered, bushy, vanilla-ice cream coloured, Helianthus Vanilla Ice and the rich, dark velvet Claret. We sow these in April direct into the garden, two seeds spaced two inches apart, at stations spaced at eighteen inches. If both germinate, we pull out one. Once they're about a foot tall, we pinch out their tips, which means they don't grow vastly tall, but are bushy and more flower productive. I love them arranged in a simple tall vase on their own, or cut down short and arranged with strongly contrasting, acid-green dill.

It's also broccoli sowing time. Broccoli of all types is good for us. It is rich in fibre and nutrients associated with all green veg, but with broccoli, it's also packed full with glucoraphanin, a compound really beneficial for us, and not found in other vegetables.

Eat broccoli and you are likely to reduce your chances of cardiovascular disease and certain cancers and beside that, it's one of the greatest home-grown veg. Keep picking the crunchy florets and the plants will produce more for you to steam and dress in a few melted anchovies, some garlic and fruity olive oil.

I often leave it too late to sow broccoli and Kale, such as Redbor, Red Russian and Cavalo Nero and then the plants are too small and struggle through the winter.

But if you get going now, sowing under cover, you're in perfect time. Sow two seeds into a coir Jiffy and then if both germinate, remove one. 3 to 4 weeks later, plant them out, spaced widely at a good 75cm/2.5 ft apart, with lettuce used for intercropping.

Lettuce Reine De Glace is ideal for this, harvested and eaten before the brassicas fill the space between the plants, or you could use the yellow-podded, late-cropping, French bean Roquencourt. That's safe to sow now as it crops late on into the autumn, but does not take up much room.

Once planted, we always feel triumphant that we've managed to get some veg in for winter picking, but of course with brassicas, your troubles are not over.

Last year, the cabbage white butterfly caterpillars stripped every one of the leaves on my cabbage patch down to a beautiful skeleton of midrib and veins, but that's the advantage of kales, particularly Redbor. They're not so attractive to the butterflies and are therefore much less loaded with caterpillars as a result.

A weekly inspection of plants to remove the offenders is normally enough. With one or all the brassicas and sunflowers sown, you've got two ornamental and edible giants to fill your garden for the summer, autumn and winter.

Sarah Raven runs cooking, flower arranging, growing and gardening classes at her East Sussex farm and has presented on BBC Gardeners World. You can purchase her flowers, seeds and kits, plus view a full list of courses at ***sarahraven.com***

Exclusive READER OFFER – 10% OFF ALL SEEDS

Period Ideas readers can enjoy 10% off all seeds by quoting the code PD16APR when calling **0345 092 0283** or visiting **sarahraven.com** *Please note the offer ends on 30th April 2016, p&p of £4.95 payable on all orders. Offer cannot be claimed in conjunction with any other offer or discount and previous purchases are not valid. For full terms and conditions, visit sarahraven.com/terms-and-conditions

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Kitchen Hub

Discover delicious seasonal recipes, the latest kitchen must-haves and inspirational ingredient ideas

YOU'LL NEED:

- 1kg Jersey Royals, scrubbed
- 300g Chantenay or small carrots
- 30g butter
- 4 lamb leg steaks
- 6 spring onions, diced
- 120g asparagus, cut into short lengths
- 80g frozen petit pois or garden peas
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Handful of mint leaves, to garnish



Great British Food's Natasha Lovell-Smith says...

The classic clean flavours of tender veg and young meat create a healthy dish



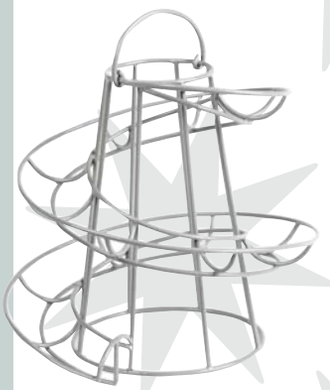
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JERSEY ROYAL SPRING LAMB SAUTÉ

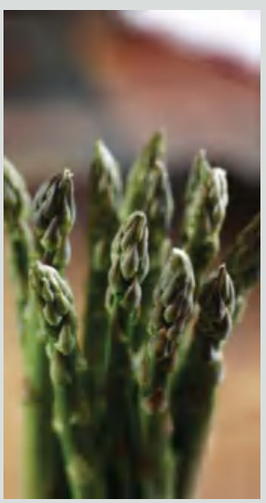
1 Cook the Jersey Royals in lightly salted boiling water until tender, about 15–20 minutes. At the same time, cook the carrots in a separate pan of water so they will melt in the mouth when served up.

2 Melt half the butter in a large frying pan and add the lamb steaks, cooking them over a high heat for 2–3 minutes on each side. Remove from the oven, cover with foil and leave to rest in a warm place.

3 Wipe the frying pan with kitchen paper and add the remaining butter. Sauté the spring onions and asparagus for 3–4 minutes, then add the frozen peas and cook for an extra 2–3 minutes.

4 Drain the potatoes and carrots and add to the frying pan, tossing gently with the asparagus mixture. Share between warmed plates and top with the lamb steaks. Serve, seasoned with black pepper and garnished with fresh mint leaves.

WHAT TO DO WITH... *Asparagus*



Lasting just eight weeks, the British asparagus season is notoriously short, so make the most of the fresh green stems while you can. Store in the fridge wrapped in damp kitchen paper, and discard the woody ends of larger spears with a satisfying snap. Asparagus can be boiled or steamed and is delicious served with a simple hollandaise sauce. Try it baked into a quiche with onions and cheese or dipped into soft-boiled eggs for a healthy breakfast. Wrapped in prosciutto and roasted, it also makes a sophisticated addition to any dinner party menu.



Classical pilasters with anthemion-leaf capitals distinguish the Regency-style Springfield chimneypiece. The surround is hand-carved in imperial white marble. The Somerset steel hob-grate is shown with a coal-effect gas fire, a matching Somerset mirror and contrasting granite hearth completes the look perfectly. **020 7482 2949, acquisitions.co.uk**

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When it comes to choosing the right fireplace, Acquisitions of London offers a complete supply and installation service, from start to finish. Founded in 1974, Acquisitions began life as an architectural antique business, but soon specialised in rescuing beautiful antique fireplaces that had been evicted from their homes in the name of fashion.

Jonathan Kennedy, Managing Director, continues: "As suitable originals became scarcer, we set out the task of replicating original fireplaces and are proud to lead the way in restoring the period mantelpiece to its rightful place in the British public's consciousness."

Today, the Acquisitions Collection of 'continuations' fireplaces is one of the finest and most comprehensive in the world - the word `reproductions' simply doesn't do the products justice.

Jonathan explains: "We are so meticulous about recreating fireplaces from every style including Georgian, Victorian and right up to modern day, that we passionately embrace traditional skills, authentic techniques and the very best quality materials, from marble to cast-iron."

A quick glance at the company's client list (from addresses such as Buckingham Palace and 10 Downing Street to famous names in the rock royalty genre), together with the team's extensive experience working with listed buildings around the country, sets the tone for exemplary service and flawless design finish.

One of Acquisitions' recently unveiled ranges is the British Made Stove Collection, which includes a choice of wood, gas and multi-fuel options to suit your period property.

Jonathan continues: "If you appreciate quality and care about the environment then an Acquisitions stove - a high efficient low cost heat source that uses renewable, natural fuel – may be the answer. We are proud to add these elegant, free standing, cast-iron and steel stoves to our extensive collection of top quality fires; proud too, that they are made exclusively at the UK's oldest stove foundry , established since 1854."

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The modern 'twist' of the Focus range really complements the decor in period properties.

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FOR ALL SEASONS

Kate and John Bolsover invite us into their radiant garden for year-round relaxation.

Words and photography **GAP PHOTOS/NICOLA STOCKEN**





Variety is the spice of a gardener's life for Kate Bolsover and her husband John, whose one-acre Berkshire creation offers something different at every turn. On a crisp spring morning, Kate, who chairs the charity Tomorrow's People, delights in the beauty of her favourite early flowers. For John, it's knowing what's around the corner that most pleases. "Spring is all light and life – it's beautiful, but all the more so because summer is still to come," he says.

NATURAL LOGIC

Theirs' is a garden for various moods, with busy areas alongside calmer spaces, more practical spots and dreamier, herbaceous sections. A morning spent here is an eclectic experience, but there is a natural logic to the garden. "As you walk around, you pass through three or four spaces, each inspiring a different atmosphere," points out John. "Our tastes are varied – we love everything from a French-style potager to the freedom of Japanese azaleas and acers."

The lower garden is a focal point. Four identical, geometric beds are contained within crisply cut box hedges and filled with tulips in spring, roses in summer. "It's incredibly pretty, with ranks of white tulips standing to attention," says Kate. "It's well-organised and beautifully maintained. There's a very informal and natural feel."

A narrow alley leads to a greenhouse and an artistically designed potager with sweet peas, fruit trees, vegetables and herbs for Kate, who is a keen cook.

It was a very different picture when the Bolsovers first moved into their cottage home. Towering rhododendrons, spreading azaleas and unruly trees devoured the light.



"Although there was lots of colour in spring," says John, "in other seasons the garden looked tired and in need of rejuvenating." However, though John has held an appreciation for the outdoors and wildlife since a young age, neither he nor Kate had much hands-on gardening experience before this project. "I'm a watcher, not a doer!" admits Kate. The couple consulted designer, Paul Morrow, after being impressed with the year-round colour in Paul's own garden.

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

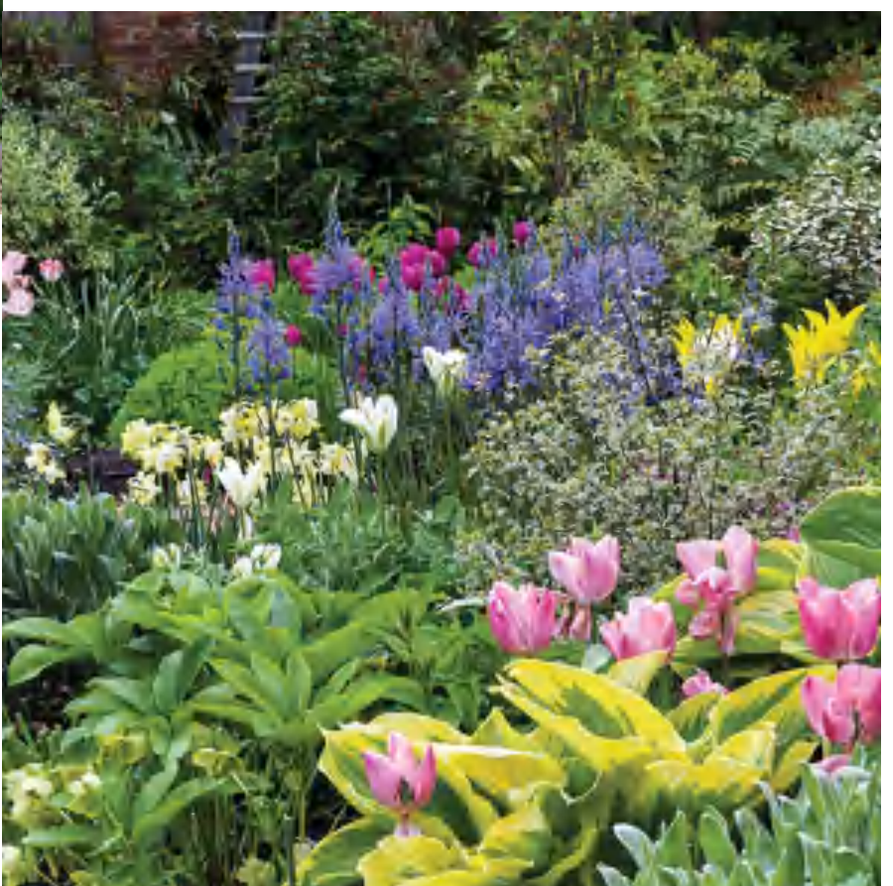
Paul was excited by what he had to work with, a framework of hard landscaping and mature plants. "But despite it being August, there were virtually no flowers," he recalls. The borders were largely swamped by weeds, whilst looming above were untamed plants that blocked views and crowded out specimen trees and more notable shrubs, such as Japanese maples, smoke bush, and the *Cornus controversa*

Above Kate and John's garden offers something different at every turn.

Far right The lush Cornus controversa 'Variegata' is now the garden's crowning glory and looks great.



Leaves create structure and set the stage for more colourful plants









Above Kate and John really enjoy the variety that their garden offers them, all year round.

Right Tulips in different shades of pink and purple ensure a strong and vivid display in the spring months.

'Variegata', which is now the garden's crowning glory. "The space surrounding a key specimen is essential to allow you to fully appreciate the plant," explains Paul. "It wasn't a bad garden: it was just dull. But there was so much potential there."

Work started with heavy pruning and the double-digging of beds and borders in preparation for perennials and annuals. "We filled seven rubbish skips as well as bringing in loads of compost and top soil to replenish the ground," Paul recalls. The effort was worth the results however, as within 18 months, spring brought scores of tulips offset by the foliage of evergreen shrubs, including elaeagnus, box and pittosporum as well as perennials including brunneras, euphorbias, hostas, and ferns.

"It's tempting to favour flowers over foliage," says Paul, "but leaves, with countless shades and textures of green, create structure and set the stage for more colourful plants." Kate and John's flowers are mostly tulips in different shades of pink, blue camassias and silvery brunnera, reflecting a blend of Kate's favourite pastel colours. "Spring starts with vibrant shades which become softer in summer," says Kate. "By autumn it's all hot oranges, reds and burgundy. I love the way the colour scheme changes."

ON THE RIGHT TRACK

The garden's paths and trails play a major part in its success. More than just a means of access to the garden's different levels, they add to the design and character with curving lines of mellow red brick and York stone. "I love the contrast between the clean-cut edges and soft planting," says Kate.

Well-kept lawns are another major feature which act in a similar way, providing a neutral backdrop to the changing

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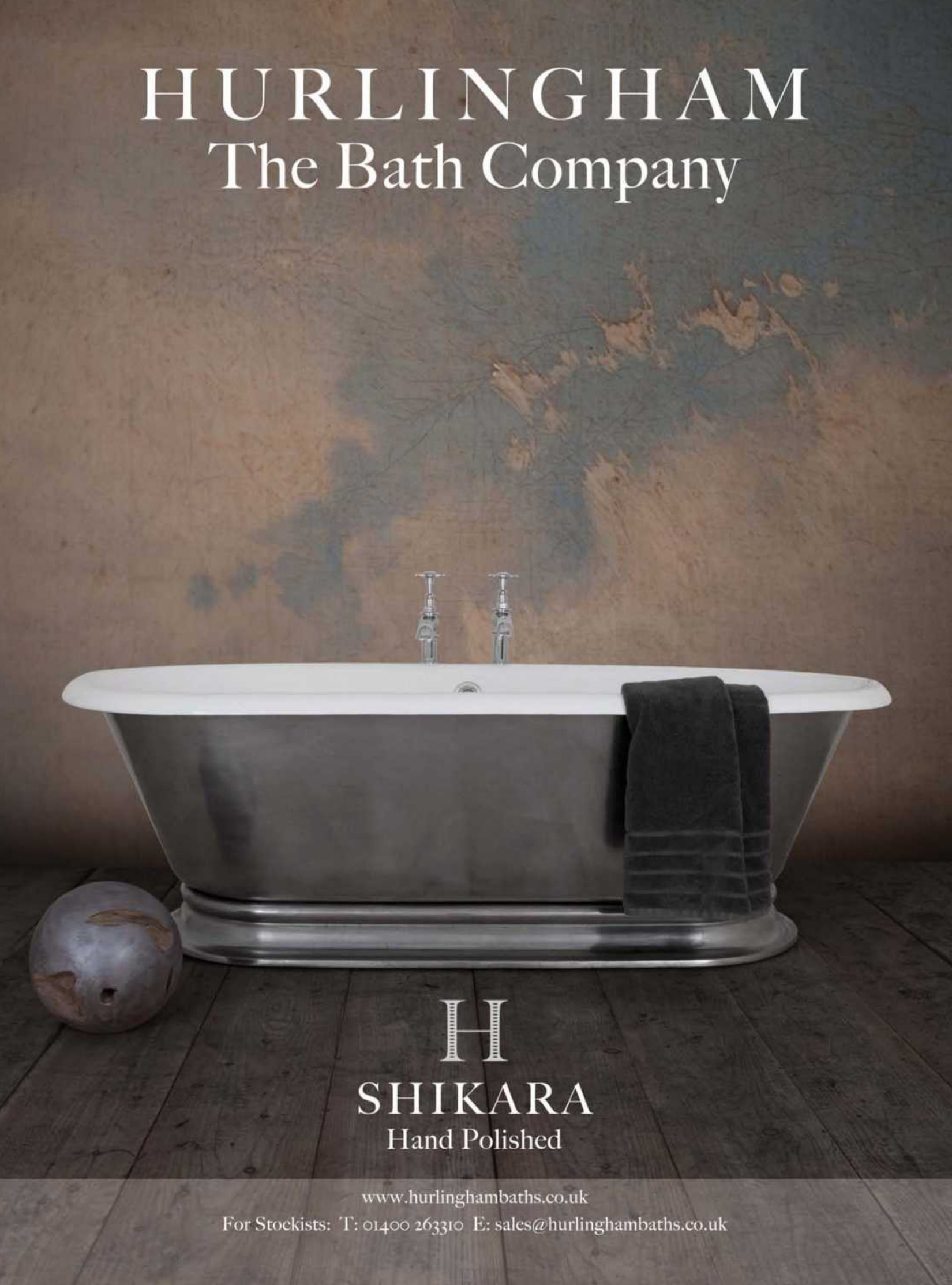


colours. “I’ve come to think of my garden as in a permanent state of flux,” says John, “I enjoy brightly coloured flowers, but don’t think you should always be bound by colour themes,” he notes. With tulips, camassias, and daffodils giving way to the summer’s lilies, then the annuals and self-seeding perennials, the Bolsover’s garden is an ever-changing prospect.

The changes between seasons have pleasantly surprised John and Kate. Every homecoming now brings the additional pleasure of discovering what flowers have opened during their absence. “Last year we were away over Easter and left the garden in a wintry state, but returned to find the tulips out,” John recalls. “I love finding all the beds surprisingly awash with new flowers,” says Kate. “But above all, we enjoy being able to walk around a lovely garden from early morning until dusk, through all months of the year.”






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A Mellow Duck piece is an easy way to add vibrant colour or texture to contemporary or traditional schemes

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How to enter

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Q Where is Mellow Duck based?

A Yorkshire

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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No cash alternative is available.

CLOSING DATE: 8th April 2016

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Victorian VISION

Moira Hancock reveals how she was second-time lucky with her Cheshire home.

Words **GAP INTERIORS/ROSEMARY BARRATT** *Photography* **GAP INTERIORS/COLIN POOLE**

After three years living in Spain and one year renting in London, Moira Hancock could picture exactly the type of family house she longed for. She just couldn't find it straight away. Her search eventually led to a four-bed 1800s semi-detached property in Cheshire, which she has gradually been renovating ever since.

"I am addicted to period houses," says Moira, who is a theatre producer and choreographer. She prefers buildings with most of their original features intact, so she viewed Victorian, Edwardian and Georgian properties in search of the perfect place. The problem was that every property Moira viewed had already been modified to somebody else's taste. "I was desperate to find something that hadn't been fully renovated," she says, "I was beginning to think that houses like that simply didn't exist any more."

As the need to find a home for her family, including her husband Paul and her daughter Jessie, became more pressing, Moira decided to revisit some of the houses she had previously ruled out. She returned to a Victorian villa she'd initially overlooked for being too close to a busy main road.

"Arriving at the house, I went straight up the stairs into the bathroom and I was completely blown away by what I found," says Moira. A claw-foot bath is a must-have for her, and this room delivered exactly that, as well as a large window overlooking a spacious private garden. "It just goes to show that you can never judge the merits of a house until you have seen it," she admits.

BIG ADVENTURE

The previous owners had left the house largely untouched, so it had all the period features Moira craved including cornices, architraves and original fireplaces throughout. After a full viewing of all three floors, she was amazed that a house she had initially dismissed as unsuitable, ticked almost all of the boxes for her.

Moving in, she was keen to make the house her own and there was plenty of work to be done, especially on the ground floor. "I couldn't wait to lose the royal blue shagpile and find out if the floorboards were in good enough condition for stripping and varnishing, which thankfully they were," Moira explains.

Another priority was to make the house more open-plan. "The biggest drawback was that the kitchen was quite small," Moira recalls, and her attempt to reshape it revealed the renovation's first major problem. "It sounds crazy, but it was only when we drilled through into the ceiling that we realised the kitchen was at a lower level to the dining room." Unfortunately, it was a job that just couldn't be done.

Moira was disappointed, but remained determined, and chose to join the property's two reception rooms instead. She had the dividing wall knocked through and double doors put in, making a much more sociable space perfect for dinner parties, evening drinks or family occasions. But, she was still struggling with the problematic kitchen and had just

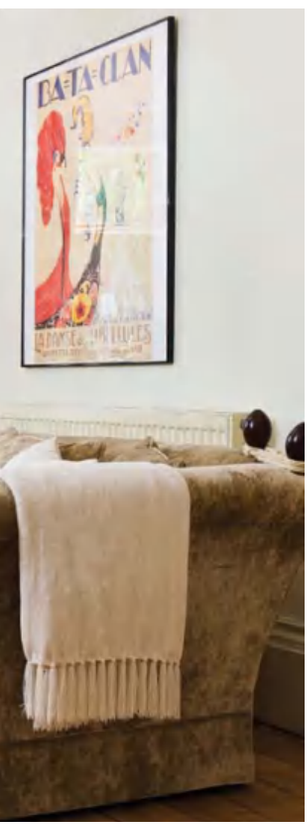


Right The table and chairs are another example of Moira's upcycling. For similarly styled tables try Edmunds Clarke, **01284 760 103, ecfurniture.co.uk**.





It just goes to show that you can never judge the merits of a house until you have seen it







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Moira's renovation is a blend of traditional and contemporary styles, which is comfortable and smart.





Left Nothing beats the red brick charm of a Victorian villa, with some pretty greenery outside.

Below Moira is especially proud of her conservatory. The Waverley Chair, £279, Delux Deco, **0845 128 3456, deluxdeco.co.uk,** is similar in style.

a couple of stainless steel units to work with. Moira decided to make the best of what she had and asked a local joiner to create some bespoke kitchen cabinets.

"I wanted a kitchen that could meet my family's needs," she explains. "However, some time later when we had the conservatory put in, the outer kitchen wall was knocked through and the kitchen had to be pulled out. We managed to salvage some of the units but I regret being so impatient and not thinking through our plans." Following this experience, Moira offers some wise words; "Don't rush into major work when you first move in. Live in the house for long enough to work out what you want to achieve in the long-term otherwise you could find yourself having to undo what you've done."

Thankfully, Moira believes the resulting kitchen-conservatory is a great solution. It solved all the Hancock's space problems by extending the cook-zone sideways and linking it to the dining room by losing the back wall and window of the house. Of course, Moira was careful to choose a style of conservatory which complemented the period property and floods the space with natural light.

UNIQUE TOUCH

"Adding the conservatory really brought the house into its own," she says. "It is a wonderful place for us to gather and creates a circular route around the ground floor which is really useful when you're entertaining." Moira integrated the conservatory into the rest of the house by choosing flooring which matched the character of her original stripped floorboards. She searched salvage flooring on the internet and paid £100 for a wooden factory ceiling.



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"Everyone thought I'd gone mad because it arrived looking like a pile of burnt wood with nails sticking out of it. However, it really helped make the space feel part of the rest of the house," she recalls.

Moira relished planning a colour scheme for her home. "We have a running joke in our house that if anyone stands still for long enough, they are likely to be painted," she laughs. "I've always loved painting and wallpapering and often I'll paint up old pieces of furniture I've picked up at antique markets."

As a collector of quirky vintage pieces, Moira needs her home to reflect her unique taste. Thanks to her theatrical background, she likes finding inexpensive pieces that give her home a sense of drama and glamour. She loves mirrors. The bigger the better. And she collects glass candlesticks and shimmering chandeliers.

"I can quite happily spend hours looking around antique markets for that special piece," she admits. "A lot of my things have been bought abroad in Spain or France because I love the continental style." If she's searching for a bigger piece of furniture, she often takes her daughter Jessie along. According to Moira, she drives a hard bargain!

More than just chief negotiator though, Jessie is also a musician, who often brings back her fellow band-mates and musicians to rehearse or chill-out in the conservatory. As a result, Moira's period home is used to heavy traffic. "I can honestly say that every room in our house is properly lived-in," says Moira. "Our home comes alive with people and it is gratifying to think that they feel relaxed and comfortable here."

Despite a few hiccups, Moira's renovation is a well-worked blend of tradition and modernity, that is comfortable and smart. "We are very settled," she explains, "but I always keep an eye on the market, as I'd really love to get my teeth into a full-scale renovation." She's a self-confessed period home addict, and with just one glimpse around this Cheshire success story, it's easy to see why.

Above Achieve a similar wallpaper effect with designs from Bradbury & Bradbury, **bradbury.com**

Below Moira's bathroom is her sanctuary. For a similar freestanding bath, try Bath Empire **02476 389052**, **bathempire com**. Find similar gilt mirrors at Overmantels, **020 3811 5449, overmantels.co.uk**









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HOW TO ENTER

Simply turn to page 119 or head to **periodideas.com** to enter this great giveaway. CLOSING DATE: April 8th 2016.



Piece *of* cake

20 readers will win a pair of tickets to Cake International the UK's leading cake decorating and baking show

The world's largest cake decorating show is making its debut at Alexandra Palace this spring with a visual feast of sugarcraft and cake decorating from 16-17 April 2016. We have teamed up with the organisers of Cake International – The Sugarcraft, Cake Decorating and Baking Show, to offer 20 lucky readers a chance to win a pair of tickets to this fantastic event.

The event, which attracts world-wide attention from cake decorating enthusiasts, is the perfect place to stock up on supplies, marvel at the extraordinary creations on display, and pick up industry tips and advice.

Queen of couture cakes, Mich Turner, and award-winning chocolatier, Will Torrent, will be taking to the Cake International theatre stage to impart their awe-inspiring skill and trusted techniques. They will be joined by some of the greatest experts from the world of cake baking and decorating.

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Visit **cakeinternational.co.uk** for more details and all the latest information.

HOW TO ENTER

Simply turn to page 119 or head to **periodideas.com** to enter this great giveaway. CLOSING DATE: April 8th 2016.

Small world, BIG IDEAS

Emma and Anthony Fane found their family home after a strange twist of fate

Words and styling **NARRATIVES/EMMA J. PAGE**
Photography **NARRATIVES/ROBERT SANDERSON**











Left Emma's home is flexible enough to meet the needs of her family as well as being sympathetic to its original features.

When Emma Fane and her husband Anthony went house-hunting for their first home together, they knew what they wanted; an exciting renovation project in a central location. Eventually they purchased an 1850 white stucco-fronted townhouse ideally located in one of London's quieter corners, but not before a peculiar coincidence.

"We loved the house as soon as we saw it," says Emma. "Although, in some ways it fell short of our ideal. It's a listed building, meaning we couldn't create the large open-plan interior that we favoured, plus it's set over five floors, which means a lot of running up and down stairs. But the fabulous views and charming lay-out outweighed those drawbacks."

The couple were yet to discover this property's deal-maker however, which was wrapped up in its recent history, and its links to their own lives. "It had been occupied for more than forty years by an old war-time colonel," explains Emma, whose husband Anthony also spent some years in the army. "And it transpired that the colonel's daughter married one of Anthony's former army colleagues. So in fact, we knew the girl who had grown up here." Emma and Anthony understood these developments as a definite sign that this was the perfect property for them, and quickly went ahead with the purchase.

LIGHT TOUCH

'The house had become rather neglected in places,' recalls Emma. She wanted most to add light to the ground floor dining room, open up the kitchen to the terrace and add further grace and grandeur to the first floor drawing room.



After the birth of the couple's son, Harry, she had a host of different needs to negotiate, with two teenagers and a small child. Furthermore, Emma and Anthony's love of entertaining friends had to be indulged, and their large collection of antique heirloom pieces required careful preservation and showcasing. The balancing act was becoming something of a headache.

"Structurally, the house didn't need any changes," says Emma. "As an open-plan living area was out of the question, we opted to renovate the terrace leading from the conservatory and to update the kitchen using simple, painted cabinetry and generous flagstone flooring." The result is a simple and stylish, uncluttered space which makes a statement, but does so subtly. 'The space now flows beautifully," delights Emma.

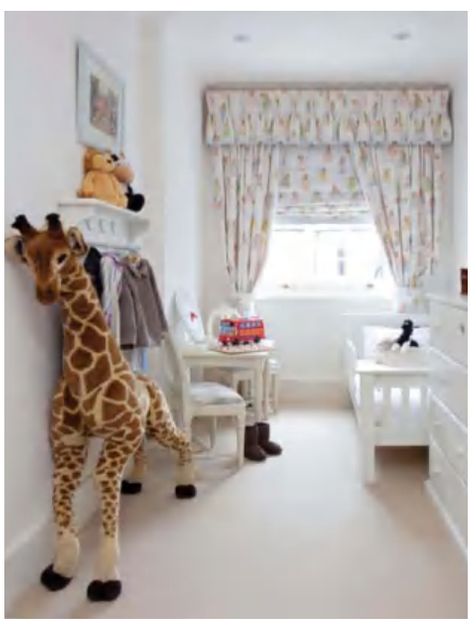
Nonetheless, Emma felt she needed expert help when it came to the finer details, including fabrics and soft furnishings, so she turned to interior designer Katharine Pooley, whose boutique she was already familiar with.

"The house was beautiful," recalls Katharine. "It just needed pulling together. So we opted for a classical traditional look, with a twist of contemporary, which was

Above The drawing room boasts original cornicing and fireplace. The Baroque chairs were reupholstered by Jim Thompson, **jimthompsonfabrics.com.** Perspex coffee table, Carew Jones **0845 230 2411, carewjones.co.uk**









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Emma worked with Katharine Pooley to create a refined and elegant scheme



Above The master bedroom is calm Sleigh bed, from £5175, And So To Bed **0808 144 4343, andsotobed.co.uk**. The Sorrento mirrored dressing table, **01642 255 589, homesdirect365.co.uk**, is a close match to Emma's own choice.

a perfect way of incorporating some of the antique pieces, including the dining room table and chairs." The dining room is one of the most memorable rooms in the house, as a fine palette of grey is combined with more elaborate features, including the fireplace and dining furniture. Another feature Katharine is especially pleased with is the mirror glass built into the alcoves, making it possible to "bounce the light around" and ensuring a bright but sophisticated space.

UNDERSTATED ELEGANCE

Together, Katharine and Emma sourced fabrics and wallpapers to lend the house an air of richness and luxury. In the entrance hall they chose a delicate butter-coloured floral wallpaper hung above the dado rail for added depth, alongside some elegant wall lamps framing a gilt mirror. The wallpaper set the tone for the drawing room upstairs, where Katharine introduced burnt yellows with the cushions and reupholstered the chairs accordingly.

"I feel that we've finally put the finishing touches to our house," says Emma. "It's a great family home. The key is to make sure that each member has their own space." As for the previous long-standing owner, who passed away before works were completed, Emma feels sure that he would have approved. "His wife loved the end result when we showed it to her and is certain her husband would have loved it too."

Emma and Anthony's home is a renovation worthy of the story that surrounds it. The tradition and history in the house is celebrated and accentuated by the changes made. It's a modern city home, with an inherently classic feel. And the couple are more than happy to welcome what they describe as "an additional family member – a very friendly ghost!"

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GREEN FINGERED

Collectables

Margaret Powling digs deep into the history of gardening and horticulture

What surprises me most about garden tools is how little their shapes have changed since Roman times, although the materials they are made from have improved, as have tweaks to their design.

"Until the 17th century, tools employed by gardeners were simple, basic and usually heavy," says Alistair Morris, consultant to the Garden Museum. "They had evolved from agricultural implements and had been in use for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. In themselves, these tools – an iron shod spade, a sickle, hoes, mattocks and rakes, together with knives and saws – might seem sufficient enough, but the increased interest in gardens, and the need for gardeners to be well-equipped led to a number of innovations."

EXPLORE AND INNOVATE

During the 17th century, more specialised equipment became available, with purpose-made garden tools and accessories being produced. These included tools specifically designed for pruning and grafting, as well as hedge shears, digging forks and trowels. "In fact, practically all the non-mechanical tools generally known today," says Alistair Morris.

New plants were introduced to the United Kingdom by intrepid explorers, who risked life and limb to bring back exotic offerings for our gardens from far-off places. There was George Forrest (1873-1932), who collected over 30,000 specimens, Robert Fortune (1812-1880), who introduced the Rhododendron fortunei and, of course, David Douglas (1799-1834) who brought back that very icon of Victorian landscape (although not in suburban) gardens, the Douglas Fir. Then there was a horticultural invention in 1835 that ensured many plants arrived safely in the UK; Dr Nathanial Ward's sealed box in the style of a portable greenhouse. Called the Wardian case, it greatly enhanced a plant's chance of survival.



The Industrial Revolution (or Evolution, as my history teacher preferred to say) had a big impact on gardening. Technological advances meant backbreaking work such as grass cutting (previously executed with scythes) could now be done using motorised lawnmowers (the first appearing in 1902 by Ransomes). Gardening was fast becoming a leisure occupation for many new middle-class town dwellers. "Early spades were iron-shod," says Kay N Sanecki, garden writer and founder member of the Garden History Society. "While the basic design has remained the same since ancient times, materials have improved, rendering the tool lighter to handle and more useful as a chopping implement."

The range of everyday tools produced between c1860 and c1930 was impressive. "As late as 1927 C T Skelton of Sheffield made 35 different types of spade, most of which could be made in different finishes and sizes and with either 'T'-or 'D'-shaped handles," says Alistair Morris. "Skelton also offered 35 different forks, including asparagus, beetroot and potato, and regional styles such as Cheshire, Guernsey, Irish, Kent, Lancashire and Scotch."

CUT ABOVE

If, upon looking through old gardening books, you conclude that gardeners were obsessed with knives (and other implements for cutting), you would be right because, according to Alistair Morris, "The knife has always been one of the gardener's most useful implements, and the requirement for specialist knives developed strongly in the 19th century. Particularly appreciated were folding knives. These came in a wide variety of shapes and sizes and were made by leading Sheffield manufacturers such as William Rodgers and Thomas Turner."

Many gardening items can still be used, for example, the humble watering can. In the 18th century, metal watering cans in brass or copper became the successor to those in earthenware, while in the 19th century, tinplate cans were produced, often painted red or green (the red ones were cheaper simply because red paint cost less than green). Tinplate then gave way to zinc and this has continued to the present day, as plastic versions hold sway in garden centres across the land.

When collecting garden implements, bear in mind that the Victorians in particular were very keen on horticultural oddities, so perhaps it's best to seek out something unusual to add to your collection, rather than simply another hoe, trowel or rake. A Victorian cucumber-straightener (a glass open-ended cylinder into which the growing vegetable was placed) hanging from your potting shed or summerhouse wall would be a real conversation piece, would it not?





Tool manufacturers: a brief history

RISE OF AN EMPIRE

For as long as people have gardened, tools to support their endeavours have been produced, first by local blacksmiths and then by specialists. The name Spear & Jackson needs little introduction to anyone who has dug or hoed, weeded or raked, for it is one of the world's oldest hand and garden tool manufacturers. John Love (formerly a draper) started the company in Sheffield in 1760. Alexander Spear, a rich merchant from Wakehurst, later joined him. By 1814 the business was in the capable hands of John Spear, Alexander's nephew. An apprentice, Sam Jackson, whose first job was to carry blades from the forge to the grinding wheels, proved his worth, and in 1830 a new partnership was formed – Spear & Jackson.

Did you know?

Garden gnomes were brought to Britain from Germany in the 1940s, by Sir Charles Isham. But, they are currently banned from appearing at the Chelsea Flower Show!



DIARY DATES

- **Rural & Domestic Bygones Auction, Diss Auction Rooms, 2nd April**

Revisit Britain's rural heritage with the UK's largest regular Rural & Domestic Bygones auction. Here you'll find early agricultural equipment, horticultural implements, domestic tools and advertising antiques. With over 1,000 lots, viewing takes place on 31st March, 2–8pm and Friday 1st April, 10am–6pm. Sale day starts at 8.30am with the auction commencing at 10am. **01379 650 306, twgaze.co.uk**

- **Newark International Antiques & Collectors Fair, Newark and Nottinghamshire Showground, 7th – 8th April**

The Newark Fair is set across an 84 acre site and boasts up to 2,500 stands with dealers from around the world. From chandeliers and rugs to sports memorabilia and paintings, plus some of the finest of antique furniture, there'll be something to suit every antique-lover's tastes. **01636 702 326, iacf.co.uk**

- **Antiques for Everyone Spring Fair, NEC Birmingham, 7th – 10th April**

Over 250 specialist dealers will be showcasing a variety of unique items from £10 to £100,000. The fair lives up to its name, with pieces including 20th century design, ceramics, glass, British and continental furniture, post-war art, jewellery, silver, decorative collectables and contemporary pieces. Find ticket and more information at **antiquesforeveryone.co.uk**

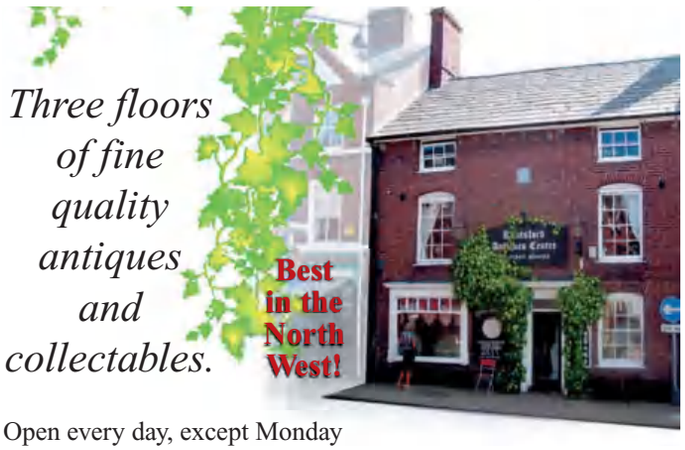
- **Auction of Antiques & Fine Art with Militaria, Clocks & Barometers, The Cheshire Saleroom, Cheshire, 14th – 15th April**

Adam Partridge Auctioneers host this antiques auction, which will particularly appeal to collectors with an interest in the military. Adam Partridge is one of the UK's best known and most well-respected auctioneers, recognisable from a number of TV shows. **01625 431 788, adampartridge.co.uk**

- **The Watch Sale, Fellows Auctioneers, Birmingham, 26th April**

This hotly-anticipated show is visited every month by collectors and connoisseurs both in the UK and internationally. Held in the heart of Birmingham's historic Jewellery Quarter, there is an ever-changing inventory of timepieces, which you won't want to miss. **0121 212 2131, fellows.co.uk**

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AT HOME WITH...

Lucy Ackroyd



We chat to the Design Manager at Christy, Lucy Ackroyd

Christy has been producing high quality towels and bed linen since it was established in 1850. The first terry towel was shown at the Great Exhibition in 1851, where it received approval from Queen Victoria. The company's first shop opened for business in 1920, and its connection with the royal family continued when Christy produced a special towel to commemorate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. The firm is also synonymous with the Wimbledon Tennis Championships, as it has been the official tournament towel supplier since 1987. It introduced its first range of opulent bed linen in 2003 to great acclaim. Lucy Ackroyd joined Christy in 2004 and became Design Manager for towels in 2007. She moved over to manage the company's bed linen department in 2010.

The place I love most in Britain is...
The coast of Northumberland – for its beautiful empty beaches, great food and wonderful and precious wildlife.

When decorating a room I always...
Try to be brave. I've learned from experience that if I'm a little bit worried that I've gone too far then it will end up looking great. If I'm totally confident then the room will probably look a little bit conventional.

I wish I had invented the ...
Jacquard loom.

My inspiration comes from....
Colour. Everything seems to start with colour for me, usually taken from one object that I've fallen for that needs the right setting to make it shine. Then I love to collect other items of furniture or textiles to create an interesting colour mix, nothing too co-ordinated, I much prefer slightly off-beat combinations.

Upcycling is a real passion. I love turning a forgotten piece into something beautiful.

My top tip is...
Try it! Sometimes colour or design combinations you didn't think would work can really surprise you.

The worst design disaster I've ever had was...
Probably using a very flash meeting table in our New York showroom as an ironing board for my samples. I soon found out that the surface buckled when heated!

If I could make over anyone's house it would be...
Lindisfarne Castle in Northumberland – Edwin Lutyens converted it in the Arts & Crafts style but it retains its rugged beauty and its location is incredible. It would be amazing to cram it full of Art & Crafts colour and texture.

The current interiors trend I love the most is... Upcycling. I love nothing better than turning a forgotten and unloved piece of furniture into something truly unique and beautiful.

I think the next interiors trend will be...
Truly bespoke fabrics and wallpaper. Digital printing will allow incredible freedom in design without the constraints of mass production.

The best advice I ever had was...
Prepare your walls properly before you put expensive wallpaper up on them.

If I wasn't a designer I would be a...
Gardener. Gardening is incredibly creative but is also therapeutic, really rewarding and often quite magical.

For more information on the fabulous collection at Christy, call **0845 758 5252** or visit **christy-towels.com**

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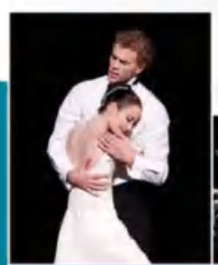
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There is a rich variety of styles at Anglesey Abbey, all carefully selected by Lord Fairhaven

Unique vision

Sean Harris uncovers the unexpected story of a remarkable man, and follows in the footsteps of royalty

Photography **NTPL/JOHN HAMMOND & CHRIS LACEY**

The first Lord Fairhaven amassed a unique collection of art, statuary and silverware during his 40 year occupancy of Anglesey Abbey, near Cambridge. He was an erudite and purposeful appreciator of art, and the Abbey came to embody his individual, highly refined and original style. When the National Trust became custodian of the property in 1966, the gentleman himself described it as representing 'a way of life that was quickly passing.'

Today, Sash Giles, the Acting House and Collections Manager, is keen to explain how Lord Fairhaven's 'way of life' is being shared with its visitors. "Lord Fairhaven was a man of very good taste; a unique character" says Sash. He came from a wealthy Anglo-American family and was a veteran of the First World War, buying the Jacobean-style house in 1926. The house was starting to slide into disrepair and he was determined to create a luxury home, fit for entertaining his many distinguished visitors. "He was an accomplished collector and curator, who had an exquisite eye for detail," says Sash. "A quiet and sometimes shy man, his personality shone through his art, furniture and decorative pieces."

The Newmarket Corridor was Lord Fairhaven's primary guest suite, and it now serves as a focal point for Sash and her team. "We have renovated the whole section – four bedrooms, a study and the corridor," says Sash, "We began working on the project in September 2014, and it's now as close as possible





Right
Sash and the team have recreated Anglesey Abbey as it looked in 1966

Below
Lord Fairhaven collected art and antiques from all over the world





to how it would have looked in 1966."

"A long list of esteemed guests have stayed here," continues Sash. "Various members of the royal family have graced the Newmarket Corridor, including the Queen Mother. The Abbey is ideally located for Newmarket racecourse and the Royal Norfolk Show, so it proved a popular resting spot for the royals. The royal family and the Fairhavens are closely linked."

After 50 years in the Trust's care, Lord Fairhaven's home remains an intriguing and inspiring place. "He had a unique take on the trends and fashions of his time," says Sash. "In many ways he tended toward the New York Lounge style, but without conforming completely. He preferred softer colours, blurred edges, and particularly liked to use textiles in the home. He was also an avid collector of Royal Academy artists, with a particular fondness for William Etty's works. We hold the second-largest Etty collection in Britain. Lord Fairhaven was keen to preserve Etty when some other collectors were less inclined to do so, which is something that we're thankful for today.'

The Etty collection is undoubtedly a highlight, as are a pair of Claude Lorrains, but Sash is most proud of the material included in the Newmarket Corridor project. "We worked closely with the textile designers GP & J Baker to ensure that all the fabrics on show are as accurate as possible," explains Sash. "We've painstakingly recreated the colours included in every room, which proved a time-consuming task, but definitely worth it. The shades that visitors see today are exactly what Lord Fairhaven would've enjoyed when he lived at the Abbey."

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Accuracy is paramount for Sash. "We've made sure that everything is covered, even down to the composition of the paint," she explains. "Hopefully the finished product is something that would've pleased Lord Fairhaven himself, and will please our visitors today. We're looking forward to people discovering a homely atmosphere at the Abbey, made possible by the Lord's stylistic choices, and innately social personality."

Lord Fairhaven was an integral part of the community. "He was instrumental in promoting local businesses," says Sash, "His support of the Cambridge Tapestry Company is a perfect example, as it gained further attention thanks to its link to Anglesey Abbey. He was also a very fair employer, and a noted philanthropist, an important supporter of the war effort, and of the Home Guard." As Sash explains, he was no 'out of touch' aristocrat, but a generous and intelligent local influencer.

The project, which was aided by the reminisces of former staff and the First Lord Fairhaven's nephew, the current Lord Fairhaven, brings to life a very particular period, and a highly original character. Anglesey Abbey's collection might reasonably be described as eclectic, but it isn't random. Every piece was specifically selected by Lord Fairhaven for its aesthetic qualities. The resulting variety, which is almost entirely derived from the mind of one man, is what sets the Abbey apart from other country houses, which are often passed through generations.

"Lord Fairhaven is Anglesey Abbey," says Sash. "He's the reason why our collection is as extensive and impressive as it is. It has been exceptionally rewarding to rediscover his legacy." The refreshed Newmarket Corridor opens on 9th March; it's a must-see for anyone who loves art, history, and antiques, and who values the spirit of the individual.

Man of the people

Lord Fairhaven was a loyal supporter of local businesses, and influential member in the community. Anglesey Abbey became one of Cambridgeshire's most prominent and important homes while he lived there. For more information, visit **nationaltrust.org.uk**

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01548 830 069, westcountrycookers.co.uk



This open-plan kitchen has been designed around a large, centre island, making the cooking and eating areas work effortlessly together. A mix of natural and artificial lighting adds further interest to this multi-functional space. Seen here finished in Farrow & Ball Hague Blue and Wimborne White, this ash in-frame shaker style kitchen boasts Super White granite countertops. Similar ranges are priced from £10,000 at DeVille Interiors.
07949 438 695, devilleinteriors.co.uk

By combining your kitchen and dining areas, you'll be creating one hard-working room which will constantly be in use by the whole family. Whether it's for weekend entertaining, or your children doing homework at the table whilst you cook after-school suppers, an open-plan space needs to be multi-functional and family-friendly. Always consider zoning distinct areas for the room to perform at its peak – central islands units, curved breakfast bars, extendable dining tables and a variety of seating options are all things to consider.

Clever use of colour and materials are also key elements. Although the space needs to be highly adaptable and flexible to your needs, you'll want to aim for a seamless flow, rather than a disjointed scheme. Steve Tough, Commercial Sales Director at Masterclass Kitchens, explains: "Muted, neutral colours often work best in an open-plan kitchen-diner, to keep things calm and to avoid clashing between the areas. Combine various shades of one colour to add warmth and interest and stick to a classic door style, such as Shaker, for that all-important, timeless appeal. This can then be dressed up, or down, with accessories and handle options for an individual look that can be easily updated over time."

The overall aim is for a light, bright and cohesive room, where different areas of activity are defined. You could consider partial room dividers such as French, bi-fold or sliding doors, or perhaps split-level flooring to help define distinct areas. Tom Layzell, kitchen designer at John Lewis of Hungerford,



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Incorporating intricate detailing and a neutral colour palette, this Ashbourne kitchen (crafted from ash) is available in 15 painted finishes and a primed option ready for painting on-site. It's pictured here in light grey and dust grey. Prices start from £7,500 at Masterclass Kitchens.
01443 449 499, masterclasskitchens.co.uk

offers his advice: "Long expanses of worktop, particularly polished stone, will help create a feeling of space as well as reflect light around the room. Flooring can certainly sometimes have the biggest impact on an open-plan space. By using the same flooring throughout, you can help blend different zones together and create continuity."

When it comes to planning your space, consider your design carefully. Dino Mussel at Parlour Farm Kitchens, explains: "As an open-plan kitchen, with distinct zones for cooking, eating, entertaining and relaxing – and likely the most used space in your home – it's crucial to have well-organised and cohesive cabinetry positioned perfectly in your space. Conceal kitchen clutter with clever storage and choose hard-working, space-saving options. A mix of open shelving, under worktop storage and perhaps a built-in larder or pantry are all possible options." The team at Parlour Farm Kitchens (**01285 885 336, parlourfarm.com**) will take you step-by-step through the initial sketching phase right down to the final carpentry stage.

Remember that it's crucial to opt for tailor-made design solutions from a company that will understand your individual needs. Your chosen kitchen planner should come up with a variety of ideas for you to consider, and the end result will be the installation of a bespoke kitchen to suit your family down to a tee.



A clever mix of built-in cabinetry and free-standing furniture, together with angular lines and curvy contours, gives this kitchen a relaxed look which is perfect for a family-friendly space. It's from the Artisan range, priced from £25,000, at John Lewis of Hungerford.
0700 278 4726, john-lewis.co.uk



Shaker style doors and a neutral colour palette make this Wimbourne kitchen a classic choice for open-plan schemes. Expect to pay from £7,500 at Masterclass Kitchens.
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This Misty Carrara quartz work surface boasts a delicate grey colouring, offset by darker tones in the kitchen for a distinctly zoned, yet cohesive space. It's a hardwearing, non-porous surface which is simple to keep clean and is available in two thicknesses of 20mm or 30mm. Expect to pay from £1,200-£1,500 per sq m, Caesarstone.
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Shake off THE BLUES

Use cool shades and wooden textures to create a relaxed and classic feel

Below Blue coral prints, £73.75 for 6; Feather prints, £51.35 for 4; Cushion cover linen, £23.50; Blue rug, from £20.60, all Broste Copenhagen. **brostecopenhagen.com**

Right Made to measure shutters, from £290m², Shutterly Fabulous. **0808 278 9307, shutterlyfabulous.com**





The British seasons are especially unpredictable in April. The calendar tells us that winter has passed, but the weather often has other ideas. April showers punctuate the bright spots and the threat (or promise!) of snow still lingers for some. It's a sort of climatological melting pot at this time of year, a meeting point between cold and warm, which in turn inspires fresh interior ideas.

A blend of lighter blues, whites and wooden details can really open up your living spaces, especially when combined with spring botanicals. However, be mindful that lighter shades such as powder blue can have a naturally cooler feel. With darker tones you can create a luxurious atmosphere, while mid-range blues offer a simple backdrop to whites, greys, and darker, timber shades for warmth.

Blue and white schemes can often be easily dismissed as feeling icy, or the first port of call with classic Oriental design. While you may wish to incorporate some elements of both of these trends, there are plenty of other original ways to work with these colours in keeping with the season. Geometric patterns are particularly popular right now, and can be effectively brought into the room using decorative tiling and textiles. The lighter palette ensures that the look isn't too busy or overwhelming, whilst allowing for individual style and preference.

Stripped back wooden furniture is another way of adding a calming atmosphere to your home. Combine a few aged pieces with smarter period features to ensure a sophisticated tone, without compromising on comfort. The dining room or kitchen are perfect areas to incorporate this style, as they tend to be busy spaces, and often benefit from a casual setting. Again, a mixture of blues can really help to bridge the gap between a quality finish and a cosy feel; either with the furniture itself, or whichever artwork you choose.

Finally, in the run-up to summer, it's important to bring the outside in. We're all itching to open up our windows, but there are ways of embracing the outdoors while the temperature gauge reads a little less favourably. Small potted plants, delicate floristry or even a window sill herb garden can brighten your home, adding freshness to the set-up. Finish the look off with white china, blue glass or wicker storage, and enjoy a home basking in the best of both seasons; the comfort of winter and the enthusiasm of spring.



A blend of lighter blues, whites and wooden details can really open up your living spaces

White nordic jug, £29; Bird Whistle Kettle, £99.95; Blackboard jar, £18 to £35; Frosting planter, £77, all available from Amara. **0800 587 7645, amara.com**





Left Relaxed denim navy pillowcase, from £15; Duvet cover, from £70; Flat sheet, from £45, all Secret Linen Store. **01243 606 245, secretlinenstore.com**

Right Blue tapestry tile collection, £2.95 per tile or set of 12 individual designs for £31.95, Orignal Style. **01392 473 000, originalstyle.com**

Bottom Left Moroccan blue dining collection, priced from £2, Sainsbury's. **0800 636 262, sainsburyshome.co.uk**

Bottom Right Belize bone picture frame, approx. £40, Eco Chic. **ecochic.com.au**







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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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Make the most of your sleeping space with advice from our experts



INDIVIDUAL STYLE

I'd like a unique bed. Can you suggest any design tips and ideas?

Both design and style are important, but the structure must stand the test of time. Make sure that the bed is well made first of all, using strong construction techniques such as welding or casting. Beds that require a central support, such as an extra middle leg, are usually lacking in all round strength. When it comes to colour, sometimes less is more! If you choose a well-made bed that comes with an extensive guarantee, it's most likely you'll redecorate before you need to change your bed. So go for a colour that is easy to decorate around. You can always add your own unique stamp through your bedding and scatter cushions. We offer the 'Elsa', which is perfect for this; the iron ring and African lodge design gives scope for all manner of original ideas for decoration.

Harry Thompson, Wrought Iron & Brass Bed Company, 01485 542 516, wroughtironandbrassbed.co.uk

UNDER COVER

What's the best material for a duvet?

There's good reason why mankind's relationship with wool dates back more than 4,000 years. The natural characteristics of wool have remained constant over time, and it never lets us down. And now there's a quiet revolution towards using wool in duvets, pillows and mattress covers. Wool has the ability to breathe. It adjusts the micro-climate around your body as you sleep, which means no more waking up hot and sweaty – just snug, cosy sleep. Wool doesn't generate mould or attract dust mites, which helps lessen allergic reactions for those that may struggle with feathers and down bedding. Furthermore, wool never deteriorates; unlike feather/down duvets it will last for decades. Plus, it's naturally flame retardant – an important safety feature when it comes to bedding.

Jessica Cross, Southdown Duvets, 01730 827 148, southdownduvets.com



SPRING INTO ACTION

How do I make sure that I choose the right mattress for me?

Buying the right mattress is not difficult, it just takes time. In our experience, only you can decide which one to buy... because your body will tell you. We recommend that you spend at least 45-60 minutes trying different models with pocket springs in differing tensions and preferably with natural materials, wool cotton and horsehair. Pocket springs will give you the right support and natural materials will allow your body to breathe correctly while you are asleep. These natural fillings also regulate your body temperature far better. Our showrooms have an extensive selection of mattresses so you can find the best one to suit your needs.

Tony D'Ham, The Original Bedstead Company, 0207 351 1955, obc-uk.net



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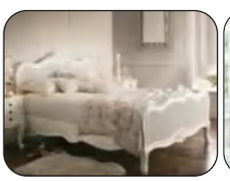
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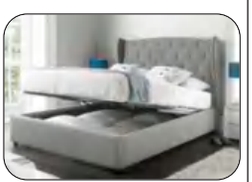


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FOLLOWER OF FASHION

What's new in bed linen for 2016?

Grey has dominated the bedding world (along with white, of course) over the last couple of years. In 2016, we're still going to have lots of grey in our bedrooms, but we will see a move towards green décor, and lots of lovely, complementary natural tones. At the Secret Linen Store, we will be introducing more natural bedlinen that works with the new green walls trend. Mix sage, duck-egg and earthy greens with coffee tones and you will always create a relaxing room. In complete contrast, we're also championing red, and introducing three new designs in red to our range this year. Our new rusty palette is a great option for a warm and striking bedroom. Adding some colour and character to beds is a great way to change the look of your bedroom and keep it fresh and updated.

Harriet Mears, Secret Linen Store, 01243 606 245, secretlinenstore.com





THE CLASSIC LOOK

What should I consider when buying an antique bed frame?

Once you have decided on the style of bed you want, your next consideration should be what size to go for. Antique beds aren't usually wider than double, so to find an original king size may prove difficult; an original 6ft wide bed is extremely rare. Also, in previous eras, people were smaller so if you are purchasing from an auction house or eBay you may struggle to find an antique bed at the correct modern length. However, if you source your bed from an antique bed specialist, you'll have better luck finding what you want. Seventh Heaven has widened beds to 5ft and 6ft, with lengthened runners to accept modern mattresses. Even if you have sourced a bed elsewhere, which is the wrong size, all is not lost. You can either have it professionally widened and lengthened, or buy a special size base and mattress to fit your bed from Seventh Heaven.

Tony Butler, Seventh Heaven, 01691 777 622, seventh-heaven.co.uk

PILLOW TALK

I want to buy some new pillows and cushions. What should I consider?

Luxuriously soft pillows and cushions are an ideal addition to any bedroom and choosing the right ones is just as important a choice as your mattress or duvet. However, with such a huge array of fibres and price ranges on offer, the process can be confusing. Personally, I'd always opt for alpaca and wool natural fibres, as I believe that alpaca wool in particular provides a perfect balance between support and comfort. The cool, dry environment created by natural fibres works with your internal thermostat to keep you at a comfortable temperature all night. Furthermore, as alpaca is naturally anti-allergenic it makes it difficult for dust mites to breed, helping people with allergies and asthma.

Ruth Strickley, The Little Wool Company, 01409 221 699, thelittlewoolcompany.com



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Tons of Tiles is one of Britain's leading tile distributors, and a company that continues to offer the latest interior fashions and trends. When it comes to what's hot and what's not in the world of tiling, it's a business with its finger firmly on the pulse. Read on for Tons of Tiles' style predictions for 2016.



HEXAGONS continue to be a huge trend in the world of interior design. With an ever-increasing variety of choice on the market, hexagon options now range from the original slate and terracotta colours to other trends including monochromes and patchworks. This shape is also gaining popularity thanks to an interior movement towards African-inspired designs. Tiles such as 'Souk' show how a hexagon tile can add a little Moroccan influence to any room.



METRO tiles are a must-have for any home. Originating from the London Underground and New York Subway, this trend truly has stood the test of time. Metro tiles are being used in every kind of interior, from family homes to funky new bars and restaurants. The tile is also evolving to incorporate other trends with ranges such as Metro Pug incorporating a textured feature tile enabling you to add a creative and modern twist to your metro design.

On the Tiles

We ask the experts for advice on tiling trends in 2016



PATTERNED & PATCHWORK Patterned and patchwork tiles have been a key trend for the last two years and this continues into 2016. Whether it's a bright mix of colours, soft pastels or cool monochrome shades, the mis-match patchwork vibe is most definitely here to stay. Ranges such as Carnival, Mardi-Gras and Masquerade are a great way to add some fun to your floor!



TEXTURED Dare to be different and add some texture to your walls. It does take a little bit of courage to opt for a textured tile, but it's worth it for the results. Textured tiles are a strong trend in 2016. Products such as Tactile by Ted Baker being used more and more in interior design to create textured feature walls that demand attention, and eye catching backdrops to beds and free standing tubs.



GEOMETRIC PATTERNS Manufacturers are continually experimenting with geometric designs and it's a major trend for 2016. Modern, funky designs with crisp edges and lively patterns bring a sense of individuality to any space. Another major positive with geometric designs is the variety on offer, and the mesmeric combinations. The GeoTile by Ted Baker serves as perfect example of originality.

Get creative

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SHINE A LIGHT

How to add a splash of colour this season





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The Fly ceiling light, £171, is versatile enough to suit most tastes. It comes in a range of vibrant colours, and looks great as a single light, or when grouped together. **01422 375 940, design55online.co.uk**



Bring a classic look to a living room, library or office with the Smartie desk lamp, £819. **0207 351 4669, besselink.com**



The Harlequin Chandelier, £960, features free-blown glass designed and made in the UK. Any length and colour combination can be chosen, to match your scheme. **01629 826 284, curiousa.co.uk**

Make a statement with Poole Lighting's Sarandon 10-light pendant, £199, it's also available in a smaller 5-light design. **01202 690 945, poolelighting.com**

SWITCHED ON

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Where to buy

Sakura yellow lustre wallpaper is part of the Archive Trails collection at Little Greene, launched for Spring 2016 and priced at £82 per roll. For more information and to further explore the variety on offer, call **0845 880 5855** or visit **littlegreene.com**


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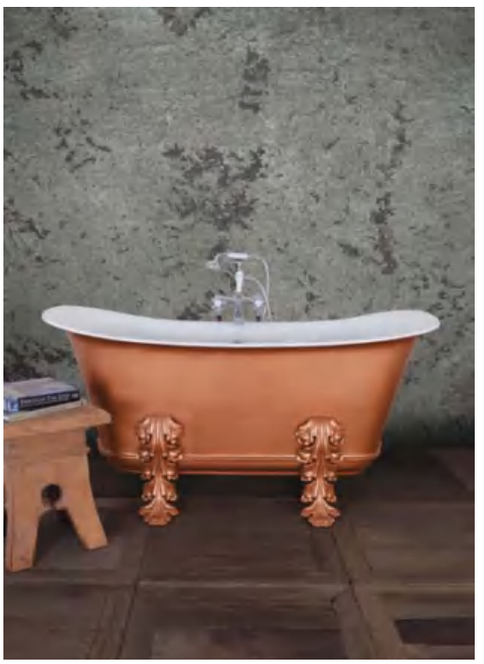
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MAKE A STATEMENT

Made from cast-iron with a vitreous enamel interior, the Acanthus Empire by Hurlingham The Bath Company makes a stunning centrepiece for a larger room. It costs £3,795. **01400 263 310, hurlinghambaths.co.uk**



GO WITH THE FLOW

This traditional bath and shower mixer tap is suitable for high and low water pressure systems, and has an easy-to-operate quarter turn mechanism. It costs £125 at Cooke & Lewis at B&Q. **0333 014 3357, diy.com**



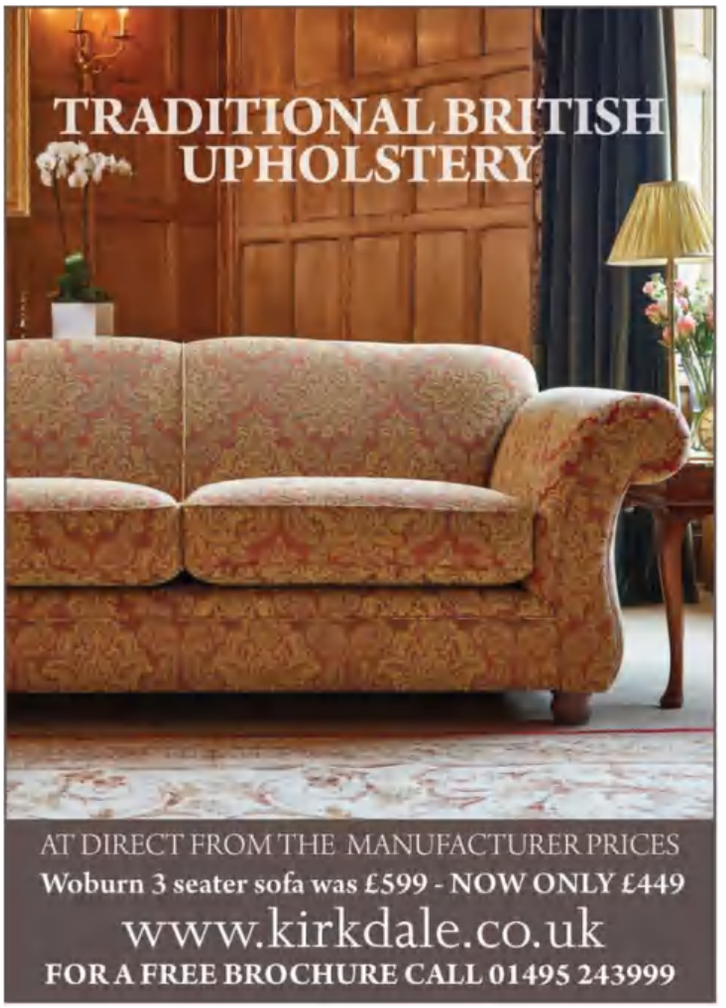
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CUTTING EDGE

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For more ideas, free fabric samples or to enquire:
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1

1: The Eaton, from £1,883, **0191 237 1303, delcor.co.uk**
2: Finsbury deep buttoned storage ottoman. Bespoke sizes available, £679, **0113 345 7526, footstoolsandmore.co.uk**
3: Cara sofa faux leather, £1,099, **0116 269 5960, livingitup.co.uk**
4: Powis sofa, from £1,804, **01273 777 810, rume.co.uk**


2


3


4

ARE YOU SITTING *comfortably?*

The sofa has its own unique, but often overlooked, spot in the history of the home

It is so ingrained within the modern living room and our day-to-day lives, that we very rarely stop to think about how the sofa came to be there in the first place. But the sofa, settee, couch (or whatever you choose to call it) has a surprisingly long, and perhaps unsurprisingly luxurious history.

ANCIENT HISTORY

The exact starting point for the sofa – a word derived from the Arabic 'suffah' – is a debatable date. The Egyptian Pharaohs are said to have reclined on a form of specifically-extended seat, whilst the Romans also enjoyed the comforts of a similar piece of furniture, perfect for lying or sitting on. You could say it was the perfect seat on which to eat copious amounts of grapes! The development of the sofa as a luxurious perch stalled with the fall of the Roman empire, however, as the harder, humbler wooden bench became the seat of choice during the Dark Ages.

The sofa as we know it re-emerged in the late 1700s, when the quest for comfort began again with cushions filled with hay or dried moss. Through the 1800s the art of sofa-making became increasingly refined, and sofas were considered a living room necessity for everyone – not just the very rich – with the likes of Thomas Chippendale contributing to their evolution. Into the 1900s the focus shifted toward fine-tuning a now recognised design, thus inspiring the scores of options that greet today's customer.

ENDLESS VARIETY

Of course, when shopping for a sofa now, your purchase may still be steeped in history. You might choose a minimalist mid-century modern design in keeping with the 1950s; a classic, buttoned back Chesterfield with roots going as far back as the 1700s; or a chic, modern look drawn from the made-for-comfort Lawson style. The variety available is endless.

Once you have selected your sofa style, now is the time to choose any accompanying accessories and add-ons. Footstools & More offers an extensive selection if you are looking to enhance your sofa set-up, with a wide choice of stools and pouffes in various sizes, shapes and styles. Consider your cushions at this stage. Try not to flood your seating with too many flamboyant designs, opting perhaps for one or two exciting motifs to enhance a simpler sofa design.

When shopping for your next sofa upgrade, approach the experience as an opportunity to rethink your living room, or simply reaffirm a style that you are already happy with. For centuries, the sofa has served as the very same focal point that it is today, and very few furniture pieces hold as much influence over interior design. So, buy like an Egyptian and do as the Romans do; make sure that yours is a sofa worth getting comfortable on – and worth remembering.



JEWEL *in the* CROWN

This month Period Ideas visits Long Eaton, Britain's centre for upholstery manufacture











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longeatonfurnituremakers.co.uk

Every interiors fan knows that the UK has a rich manufacturing heritage but we can be shy about celebrating our success today. This is why *Period Ideas* is very proud to support Long Eaton as the UK centre for high-quality upholstery manufacture.

This hardworking town was once a small agricultural village up until the late 19th century. It lies between Nottingham and Derby just north of the River Trent and it was a thriving industrial town manufacturing much of the Nottingham lace, which was then sold worldwide.

By the middle of the 20th century demand for lace had fallen sharply but fortunately this coincided with the rise of furniture and upholstery manufacturing in the town. The upholstery trade continues to thrive to the point where the town is now the centre of quality upholstery manufacture in the UK.

Over 50 companies are involved in furniture manufacturing or allied industries in Long Eaton and much of the upholstery made here is sold in high-end furniture retailers in the UK such as Harrods, or exported to similar retailers around the world. Over 2,700 people are employed in furniture manufacturing or allied industries in Long Eaton and the turnover of these companies is over £250 million.

The UK's main training centre for high-quality furniture manufacture was formed by Long Eaton companies and is now based just three miles away in Beeston. Here, the next generation of designers and makers undertake all aspects of training in traditional and modern skills working, towards a City & Guilds qualification in Cabinet Making, Frame Making, Upholstery, Cutting, Sewing and Polishing.

CAPITAL IDEA

Long Point, which is the main exhibition for upholstered furniture in Britain, takes place twice a year in the town, attracting buyers from all over the world. This was inspired by High Point, a city located in North Carolina, which is known as the Furniture Capital of the World, thanks to its twice yearly High Point Market, which draws over 100,000 exhibitors and buyers worldwide. The Long Eaton Guild of Furniture Manufacturers was inspired to hold its own event, and this has confirmed the area's status as a world-class destination. You won't be surprised to learn that furniture manufacturers making elsewhere in the country have permanent offices and showrooms in Long Eaton to benefit from the reputation the town has for high-quality furniture.

Other centres for furniture manufacturing in the UK have included Beith in Scotland, the east end of London and the south coast, as well as High Wycombe. Sadly, changing economic times brought the closure of its famous G-Plan factory in the 1990s. Parker Knoll also took the decision to stop making furniture in the Buckinghamshire town and Ercol moved to a new state of the art factory in Princes Risborough.

Long Eaton's story began thanks to J. E. Marshall's pioneering spring units for beds. Before the First World War, he formed the Buoyant Upholstery Company to use his patented springs in upholstered furniture. As the furniture industry developed throughout the 20th century, Long Eaton was a hotbed for innovation. The industry has continued to grow, with new firms being fathered by the older ones and a number of companies are now in the second and third generation of family ownership.

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A Tale of TWO STYLES

Sean Harris explores the quest for national identity which divided Victorian society

As Britain faces a referendum on its EU membership, concerns about what 'Britain' and the British stand for are coming to the fore. As we struggle to define our future, it is interesting to see how our ancestors wrestled with similar issues. In the Victorian era, the Battle of the Styles was a defining period in the history of design and architecture.

The 'battle' was largely fought during the years 1856–1860, as experts debated how best to redesign London's parliament buildings, after a destructive fire in 1834. Confidence and pride in Britain was strong, and there was now the need for a distinctive national style; and the country chose sides between the traditional, classical approach, and the emerging challenge of Gothic revival. The Classical style had dominated design in Europe since the Renaissance, but there were calls for a change in direction. When Charles Barry's blueprints were selected from 97 entries, and the asymmetrical, clock-towered Palace of Westminster was built, Gothic had triumphed.

As Big Ben rang out across London, there was a ripple effect in terms of interior design and approaches to home décor. Charles Barry et al had breathed new life into British architecture, and in the late 19th century aesthetic experimentation continued.

Mass produced goods ensured that more people could take an interest, with imitation and reproduction products also gaining popularity. The European influence became increasingly prominent, and to this day we look to France as a stylish standard bearer. In the High Victorian age the focus was on fine, intricate details. The Gothic revival had forced a general rethink but it also pushed people to think as well, as we can see in the groundbreaking work of John Ruskin and William Morris.

In the 1850s Brunel, Darwin and Dickens symbolised Great British ambition, social mobility and success. By the 1890s, William Gladstone had long since ushered in the Liberal movement and the campaign for women's suffrage had gained considerable momentum. The plethora of interiors periodicals and newsletters ensured that the home was becoming a key means of self-expression and one-upmanship. The Victorians brought unbridled passion back into interiors combining the romance of the Gothic with the grandeur of high classical design. Their appetite for colour, pattern and trinkets may seem over the top for today's tastes but we know all too well the appeal of conspicuous consumption. As Oscar Wilde himself said; "I can resist everything except temptation."



EXPERT APPEAL

If you'd like to recreate a Victorian look for the modern world, then Burgess Reclamation has the knowledge and experience to help turn your dreams into reality. A family-run business, Burgess has been working in the reclamation industry for almost 70 years. The company specialises in flooring and furniture, as well as fireplaces, some appliances and wooden beaming. For further information, call **01869 346 347** or visit **burgessreclamation.co.uk**



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2 With its striking red enamel door, this stove from OER is a great contrast with a traditional fireplace. **01782 319 350, oerfireplaces.com**

3 Dunsley Heat's Highlander 16 stove has an output of up to 16.9KW when refuelled every four hours. **01484 682 635, dunsleyheat.co.uk**

4 Gas fires offer a highly efficient way to keep you cosy. We love the selection at Nu-Flame. **020 8254 6802, nu-flame.co.uk**

STOKE IT UP

Discover how to give your fireplaces the 19th century treatment

In Victorian homes today, fireplaces are largely decorative structures that may provide extra cosiness in winter, but for our 19th century ancestors, they were vital for keeping houses warm. To maidservants, the grate was a never-ending source of hard work, requiring daily cleaning and polishing before a new fire could be laid. In large family homes, which may have contained one in every room, this was a daunting task. Staying warm was expensive, too, as a letter written in 1855 by Jane Carlyle to her husband, the eminent historian, Thomas, reveals. She lamented that the Carlyles, who were by no means extravagant, burnt a ton of coal each month.

Fireplace design varied enormously across Queen Victoria's reign, incorporating ornate French-inspired designs and handsome marble surrounds with elements of classical architecture. By the end of the century, developments in manufacturing techniques meant that the decorative cast iron inserts we commonly associate with 19th century homes today became popular, while attractive tiles featuring floral and geometric designs were also fashionable. Towards the end of the century, a small number of wealthier homes were fitted with cast iron radiators, although central heating as we know it did not become widespread until much later.

SAFETY CHECKS

If you're renovating a Victorian property today, be sure to get your chimneys checked by an expert before reinstating an original fireplace in order to negate the risk of toxic fumes leaking back into the room. Get the flue cleaned and inspected – the National Association of Chimney Sweeps (**01785 811 732, nacs.org.uk**) is a good place to start. For original fireplace surrounds, check your local salvage yard. You'll find the owners to be a wealth of knowledge about suitable styles and designs that will look good in your home. Be sure to check the condition carefully before making a purchase and even though it may sound obvious, take accurate measurements to avoid expensive mistakes.

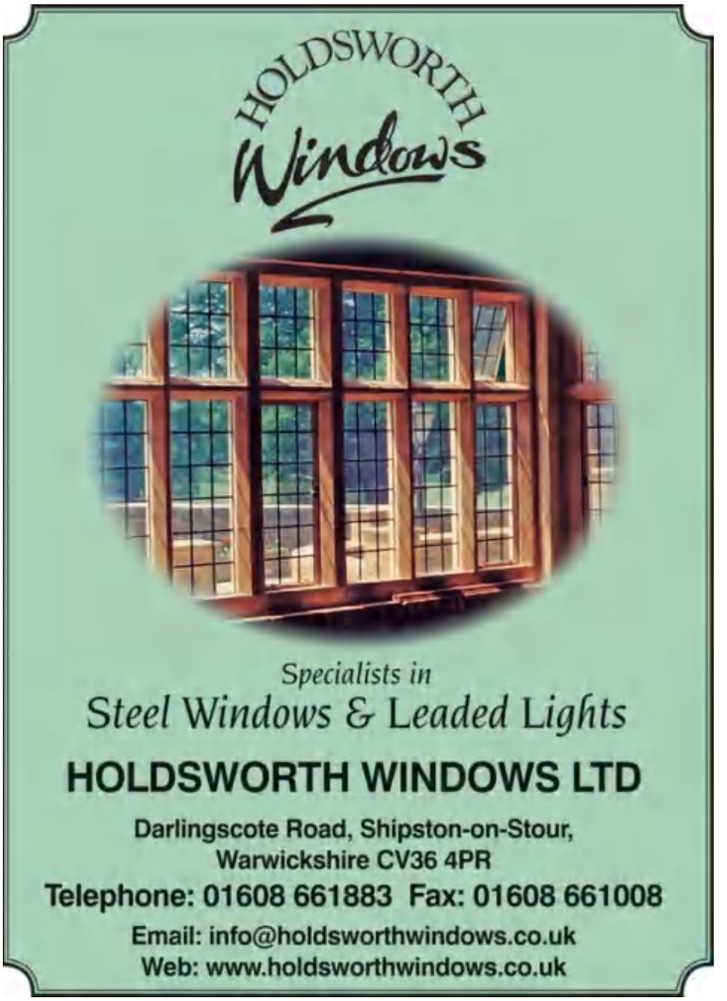
These days, there are some very good reproductions on the market, too, allowing you access to a wider range of styles. It's possible to buy an entire suite, which includes the hearth, back panel and surround, or individual pieces as you require.

If you don't want the hassle of cleaning the grate, a stove is another good option. This will typically burn wood, coal or smokeless fuel, and some models can also heat water and radiators. Remember, also, that your chimney and flue must conform to Building Regulations, so seek professional advice before you proceed.






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Left The Katrina Victorian-style metal bed boasts curved head and foot ends and a glossy ivory finish, £199, double; £209 king, at MY-Furniture. **0800 092 1636, my-furniture.co.uk**

Below The Romance bedroom collection includes this double wardrobe with delicate carved details and ornate metal key surrounds. In keeping with Victorian storage solutions, it has a mix of adjustable shelves and hanging space. It's priced at £1,195, at Maison Home Interiors. **020 8940 0230, maisonhomeinteriors.com**





Right The steel framework on this Atlas metal bed includes moulded details and is seen here in black (also available in cream) with polished brass finials, £179 for a double, at Unique Chic Furniture. **0115 986 9222, uniquechic furniture.co.uk**

Bottom Hardwoods in dark tones were a firm favourite and this genuine Victorian mahogany chest of drawers is priced at £525, at The Old Cinema. **020 8995 4166, theoldcinema.co.uk**

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Bring a touch of old-fashioned charm to your boudoir with Charlotte Barber

When it comes to being inspired by the ornate beauty of Victorian furniture, the bedroom is a great place to start. Authentic features, of course, must be preserved. So, if your bedroom already boasts original pine floorboards, a cast-iron fireplace and floral tile detailing, these elements will provide a great backdrop for a romantic scheme to showcase a fresh approach to Victorian design.

Dark woods such as mahogany, oak and walnut might have been the trademark timbers of the era, but just one or two pieces of 'brown furniture' will be enough. Don't be afraid to update walls, paintwork and fabrics for a light and bright feel. Look out for reproduction furniture which has a new twist, for example, ornately carved wooden pieces which have been whitewashed or traditional sofas and chairs reupholstered in neutral fabrics for contemporary appeal. A folding screen, is a must-have piece to add interest to a boudoir.

Classic metal bedsteads will stand the test of time. Original brass and iron beds can be very expensive, but today's high-quality reproduction pieces offer design elements that are oh-so-chic – such as polished brass or painted metal tubing together with ornate finials and moulded detailing. Painted cream or white ensures a soft and romantic aesthetic and a wall-mounted canopy, with a sheer fabric, is an added option.

Apart from the bed, a free-standing wardrobe was the largest item of furniture in the Victorian bedroom. The washstand was another key element, complete with marble top, ceramic bowl and water pitcher. Today, they still make attractive period features, and keep in mind that most can even be converted to hold modern plumbing.



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GLASS ACT

Whether you're restoring or replacing, be sure to choose windows in keeping with the style of your property

When it opened in Hyde Park in 1851, Sir Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace became the largest building on earth. Erected in just nine months, the vast structure was built to house Prince Albert's Great Exhibition, and was itself a feat of Victorian engineering. The palace was built from steel girders, together with 300,000 of the widest panes of glass ever seen, and the entire structure was prefabricated off-site, allowing for quick assembly.

Without the abolition of glass tax in 1845, which allowed Birmingham-based manufacturer, Chance Brothers to develop plate glass, the palace might never have existed in such spectacular form. This key development meant that window design on the domestic front began to change, too, with large-paned vertical sliding sashes and three-sided bays becoming the norm in houses throughout the era. Towards the end of the century, the Queen Anne revival also led to the reintroduction of glazing bars in some instances.

BACK TO BASICS

If you're lucky enough to have original windows in your 19th century property, there are a number of companies who can restore them to their former state. Retain the old glass if possible, as its physical imperfections look more interesting than modern float glass, which is completely smooth. Poor insulation means sash windows can also be prone to draughts, which a careful restoration can eliminate. Specialist firms like Ventrolla will remove each unit from its frame before replacing decaying timber and filling cavities with resin. Cords will be renewed, pulleys serviced and sashes correctly balanced to ensure that the windows operate smoothly.



Above Sash Window Workshop is a great place to start if you want to restore your existing windows and doors. The company also makes fine reproductions, too. **01344 868 668, sashwindow.com**

In cases that are beyond repair, a full replacement may be required. Choose a company that will produce sympathetic windows that are in keeping with the style of your home. Sash Window Workshop has some great examples of new units that can be double glazed, giving you the best of both worlds. Each product is made by hand and any design or pattern can be replicated.

If you want to let more light into your house, a roof lantern is another great addition; 4 Season (**0330 999 4414, 4seasononline.co.uk**) produces a range of traditional designs with aluminium frames. However, do your research carefully before replacing any units, particularly if you live in a conservation area. In this instance, most local authorities will require homeowners to replace like with like, and non-compliance could result in you being asked to remove your new windows if they do not meet the desired specifications.

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MAKING AN ENTRANCE

Discover which doors look best in your 19th century home



For our Victorian ancestors, a front door could speak volumes about the people who lived behind it. A smartly painted design, adorned with a solid brass knob, bell and letterbox, was a very good way for the owner to telegraph his or her social status to the world at large. Doors were usually panelled, with panes of glass at the top to let light into the otherwise dark hallway. In wealthier households, it may have been recessed into a porch to shelter visitors from the elements while they waited.

If your home has its original front door, treasure it; it is, after all, a valuable antique. In cases where repairs are needed, hire the services of an expert joiner who can remove and replace sections of decaying timber, and retain the original glass if possible. Dirt and debris can be removed from door furniture using a soft brush, but avoid abrasive tools that could scratch the metal. Remove any unwanted paint with a specialist product, and use a little oil to loosen stiff letterboxes or knockers. Check your home insurance policy to ensure that your door meets the minimum security requirements of your agreement, and if your home is in a conservation area, do your research before carrying out work that could be seen as changing the character of the building.

INSIDE JOB

Internal doors were also panelled, and sometimes contained panes of etched or stained glass in the upper half. Knobs and handles were likely to be brass, although other materials such as wood, glass or even bone were sometimes used.

If you're intending to replace external or internal doors, a reclamation yard is a great place to look for original designs that will match the age of your home. The internet is also a very useful resource, and will help you to broaden your search right across the UK. Salvage yards are also a good for searching out antique door furniture, too. Remember that your external doorknob, knocker, bell and letterbox were probably purchased as a set, so look for examples that go well together.

Reproductions are another option, allowing you a little more flexibility. However, if you're intending to swap your doors for new ones, be sure to choose designs that are in keeping with the style of your house. There is plenty of choice when it comes to new door furniture, too, and whether you want to recreate the Victorian look or add contemporary decorative touches, you're sure to find something that suits.





Above: Explore a superb selection of door furniture at Period House Group. **01427 871 467, phg-uk.com** Far left: Danico knob, £45.60 per pair, Danico Architectural Ironmongers. **020 7483 4477, danico.co.uk** Left: Ebonised door knob, expect to pay £46, Period Features. **01538 384 682, periodfeatures.net**

FANTASTIC READER OFFER!

More Handles (**01228 516 516, morehandles.co.uk**) stocks an extensive range of knobs, handles, doorstops and other hardware, including many designs that are ideal for 19th century homes. The company is offering readers of *Period Ideas* a discount of £5 when an order of more than £25 is placed. Simply quote code MH5OFF25PI at the checkout.



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Parquet flooring has been a prominent style choice in Britain since the Victorian era. Herringbone is the most popular parquet pattern.

STEP BACK IN TIME

When you rethink your floors, take inspiration from the past

Wealthy Victorians loved creating the right ambience in their homes and today's passion for interior design stems from this. Flooring was certainly used to accentuate the rest of the home in the 1800s, especially for richer families, and we still use many Victorian trends and techniques in flooring today.

Timber was a popular choice for a strong and reliable floor. Solid oak was especially favoured by home-owners and often imitated by those unable to afford the real thing. If you are lucky enough to own original Victorian flooring, seek expert advice as to how best to bring those boards to life. When skilfully treated and restored, genuine floorboards can bring huge amounts of character to your home, as well as potentially adding value to the property.

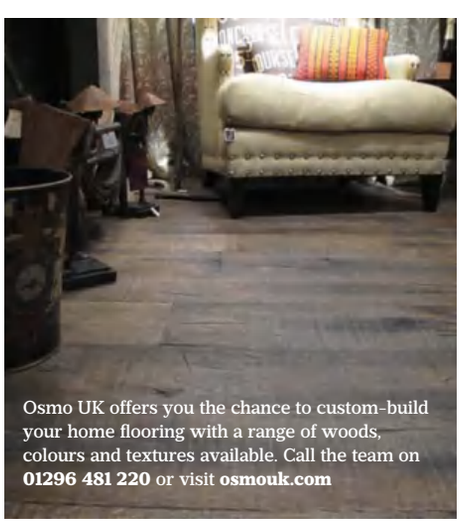
But if you cannot boast the real thing to restore, do not despair! There are many ways of achieving the style you want. Natural Image Wood Floors is a leading specialist in engineered hardwood and natural stone flooring, providing an extensive range of styles to suit a Victorian theme, as well as other looks. (**01622 840 420, stoneandwoodfloors.co.uk**).

Parquet flooring is another option, having originated in France in the late 1600s, before being brought over to the UK during Queen Victoria's reign. It still adds a certain *je ne sais quois* to any space, even when recently fitted, thanks to its more immediate decorative appeal. Despite its intricate design, parquet flooring is reasonably easy to maintain and clean, meaning that your floors should never look anything less than fabulous!

Decorative tiles were also popular in the Victorian era, and ensure that your flooring is original and individual. Patterned tiles were popular in bathrooms, hallways, corridors and dining rooms, which is a trend that continues today. There is an element of risk and reward with flooring tiles; the possibility that some designs may become damaged is perhaps a little higher, but if well cared for they ensure a dynamic effect.

Remember that carefully chosen rugs and carpets can also be used to zone a room. Patterned rugs are synonymous with the Victorian era. If you'd like to find out more about natural carpets to suit traditional flooring styles of all types, J Hayden Carpets offers a range of sisal, seagrass, cotton and linen options, as well as a wealth of experience in the industry (**01424 431 809, haydencarpets.org.uk**).

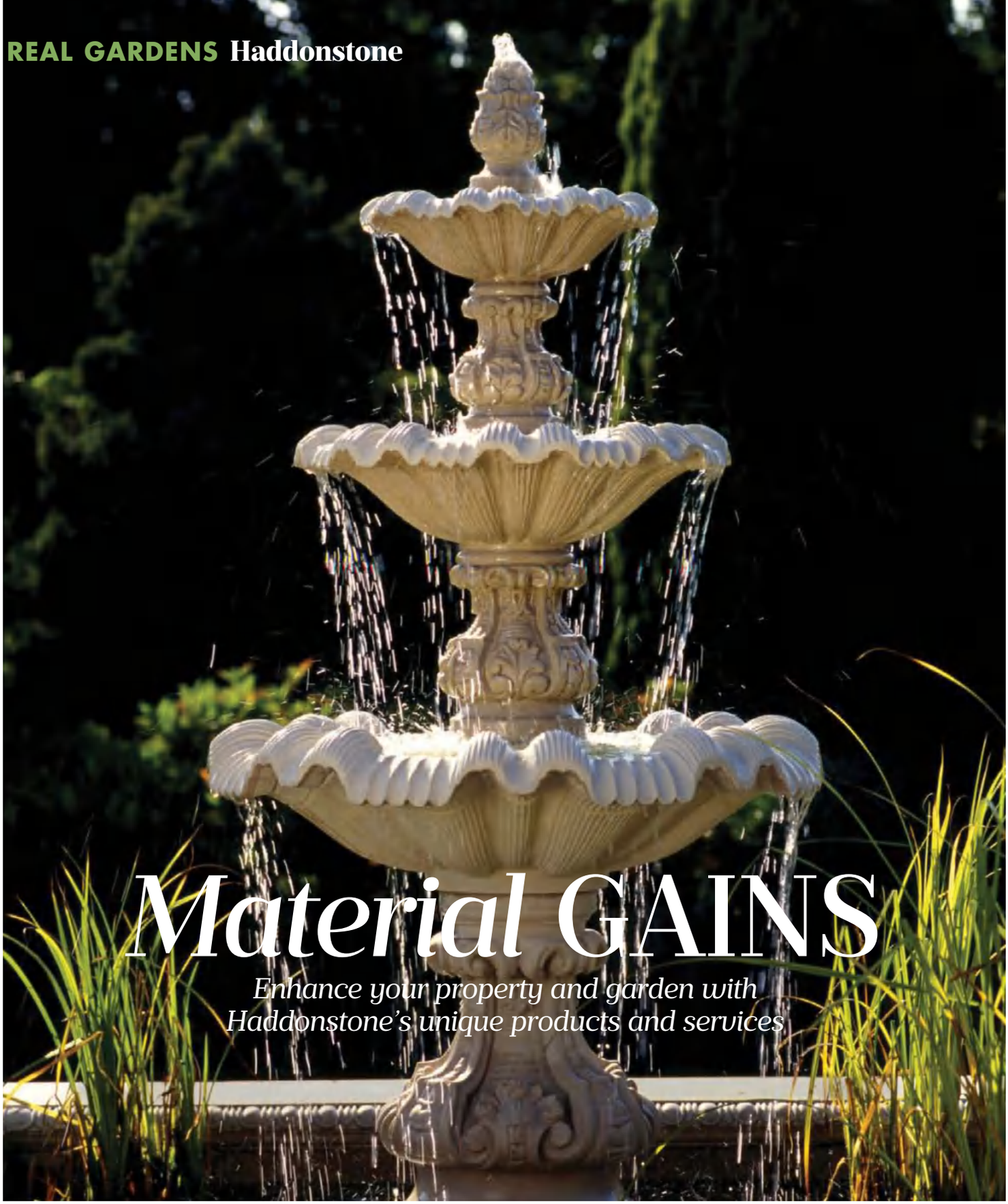
Finally, consider an analogy which Mrs Beeton would appreciate. Just as the most cunningly decorated cake needs an effective and attractive base to support it, a beautiful room requires an elegant and practical foundation to anchor your style.



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Based at East Haddon, in the rolling countryside of Northamptonshire, are Haddonstone's beautiful show gardens and interior showroom which ensure visitors can see many of the designs in situ. The acclaimed gardens feature designs from the company's successful collaboration with the Sir John Soane Museum, as it continues to work with leading architects, designers and museums around the world.

The gardens and showroom are open Monday–Friday, excepting public holidays and the Christmas period, between the hours of 9.00 am and 5.00 pm. The gardens are also open on the first Saturday of the month from April–September.







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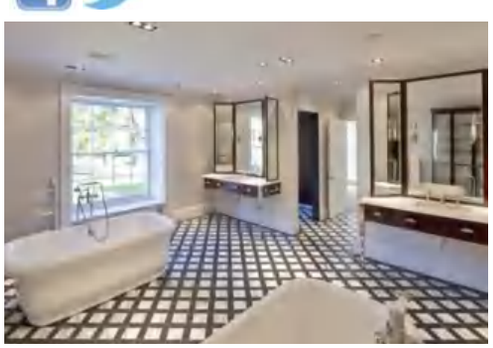
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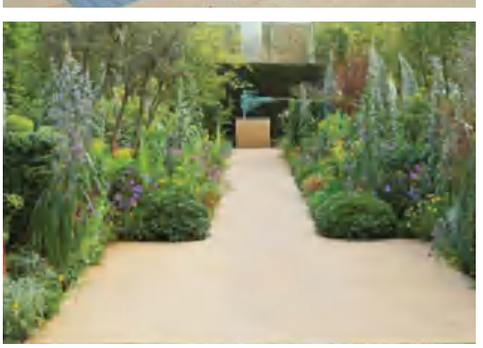
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Inspiration and practical advice for owners of older properties

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Bryan Williamson & Daughters has specialised in the renovation of period properties for over 20 years, and the firm is responsible for over 200 expertly executed projects. This family business offers a wide range of services and is well-equipped to perform all manner of tasks, from repairing individual fixtures to conducting an entire property renovation. Browse the website to find out more, and to view a comprehensive list of services on offer including stonework, plastering, plumbing and electrics. Call ***01342 834 829****, or visit* ***bwilliamsonanddaughters.co.uk***



Out of the Ashes

In April 2015, Clandon Park suffered a devastating fire which damaged some parts of the 18th century Surrey mansion irreparably. One year on from this disaster, the National Trust is making great progress with one of its most ambitious projects to date, and the future looks a whole lot brighter for Clandon itself. "Our plans involve returning parts of the house to its 18th-century glory," says the Trust's Director-General, Helen Ghosh, "whilst at the same time creating a building of beauty and relevance for the 21st century." For more information and updates on the project, visit **nationaltrust.org.uk**



Building for the Future

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings is running a series of property masterclasses throughout 2016, specifically aimed at those involved in historic buildings, including architects, builders, contractors and craftspeople. The classes are a combination of lectures, practical demonstrations and hands-on workshops, and they are recognised for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) by the Institute of Historic Building Conservation. Places on each class are likely to be filled fast, so don't hesitate to get involved. April's event on free-standing garden walls is fully-booked, but there are other options later in the year, including 'Repair Gauged Arches' at Hampton Court in October. For more information on these courses and much more visit ***spab.org.uk***

Timely tasks:

- Give your walls a fresh coat of paint, both inside and out. It will make your home look a lot smarter, and ready for the summer season.
- Check your roof for damage that may have been caused over blustery periods. Replace any loose, broken or lost tiles.
- Make sure you're not caught out by a late winter cold snap. Keep salt and grit near your driveway just in case!

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SUMMER PROJECT

With one eye on the approaching summer, make sure that your outbuildings are ready to look their best once the warmer weather comes and the garden parties begin. Farrow & Ball offers a range of exterior paints to ensure a superb finish. ***01202 876 141, farrow-ball.com***



GRAND DESIGN

Welsh Oak Frame prides itself on providing a product and service that's at once traditional and modern. The company's contemporary designs are built using time-served construction techniques, making for an original home improvement that'll have the whole town talking!
01686 688 000, welshoakframe.com



SPRING CHIC

Smaller outbuildings can still make a bold statement as major focal points for the home and garden. The Rowlinson Connor Cabin, £2,950, offers an outside area and a charming sheltered inside space, making it ideal for the ever-changeable Great British weather. Available from Heritage Gardens, ***0800 694 1841, heritagegardens.co.uk***



MIGHTY OAKS

Crown Oak Buildings has created hundreds of timber frame structures and garages across the UK, to suit a variety of local environments and individual needs. Every design is tailored to your personal tastes and ideas. For more information, or to enquire about the firm's alternative self-build kits, call ***01732 866 910*** *or visit* ***crownoakbuildings.co.uk***

Crochet frames



YOU'LL NEED:

- 4mm crochet hook
- Debbie Bliss, Cotton DK in Bright Red (A), Butter (B) and Ecru (C)
- Embroidery hoops or steel rings – 7.5cm, 9cm, 10cm

Round red frame

Rnd 1: (RS): Join yarn A on to 10cm ring with a sl st, working through centre of ring, 101dc. Join with a sl st in first dc. (101 sts)
Rnd 2: Rnd 2: 3ch (counts as 1tr), 1tr in each st to end. Join with a sl st in top of 3ch. Fasten off.

Yellow daisy frame

Rnd 1 (WS): Join yarn B on to 9cm ring with a sl st, working through centre of ring, 106dc. Join with a sl st in first dc. (106 sts)
Rnd 2: 2ch (counts as 1dc, 1ch), * miss 1 st, 1dc, 1ch, rep from * to end. Join with a sl st in first dc.
Rnd 3: 1ch (does not count as a st), 1dc in 1-ch sp, * 5ch, miss 5 sts, 1dc in next 2 sts, rep from * to end. Join with a sl st in first dc. Fasten off.
Rnd 4: with RS facing, rejoin yarn with a sl st into any 5-ch sp, 3ch (counts as 1tr), * 5tr in 3rd of 5ch, 1tr in 5-ch sp, 1tr in dc, 1tr in next 5-ch sp, rep from * to end. Join with a sl st in top of 3ch. Fasten off.

Yellow and white frame

Rnd 1: Join yarn B on to 7.5cm ring with a sl st, working through centre of ring, 82dc. Join with a sl st in first dc. (82 sts)
Rnd 2: 2ch (counts as 1dc, 1ch), * miss 1 st, 1dc, 1ch, rep from * to end. Join with a sl st in first dc.
Rnd 3: 3ch (counts as 1tr), (1tr, 1ch) in each 1-ch sp to end. Join with a sl st in top of 3ch. Fasten off
Rnd 4: Join yarn C with a sl st into any 1-ch sp, (1dc, 1ch) in each 1-ch sp to end. Join with a sl st in fist dc. Fasten off.

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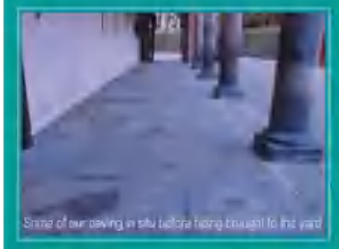
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TRANSFORM PLAIN WHITE TILES INTO SOMETHING SPECIAL

DIY: Watercolour Coasters

Find white ceramic tiles at diy.com

Ceramic tiles aren't just for walls; with some simple customisation they can also be turned into stylish and durable coasters. This beautiful watercolour effect is easily achieved by colouring in with permanent markers, then spraying the surface with isopropyl alcohol, which causes the inks to run and blend together. This make is all about experimenting and each coaster will be unique. Find more ceramic painting projects at **homemakermagazine.co.uk**



YOU'LL NEED:
- Plain white wall tiles
- Permanent markers
- Isopropyl alcohol spray
- Rubber/latex gloves
- Acrylic spray varnish
- Scissors • Pencil • Felt fabric
- Bostik all-purpose extra strong glue

1 First make sure that your work space is well ventilated and that all surfaces are protected. Isopropyl alcohol can damage some painted or lacquered surfaces, so be certain to choose something suitable to work on.

2 If you're painting used tiles, make sure that they're free of any dust or dirt. Begin to colour in small sections using a permanent marker. This doesn't have to be in any way neat, but stick to small areas as you're going to be spreading the ink out. You can always add more later.

3 For this next step, you'll need to wear rubber or latex gloves to protect your skin from the isopropyl alcohol. Spritz a little of the alcohol over the tile. You'll see that the ink will start to split and speckle.

4 Pick up the tile and tilt it to allow the ink and the alcohol to mix, creating a thin wash of colour. Continue to tilt the tile in different directions to manipulate the ink around the surface until you're happy with the distribution.

5 The alcohol will evaporate quite quickly, so if the tile dries out before you've finished, spritz over a little more and repeat the process. If you want to start again, just spritz and wipe down with some kitchen towel. Once you've got the hang of it, keep going and decorate the rest of the tiles.

6 Once you're happy with the tiles, leave them to dry fully. Once dry, seal the surface using a clear acrylic spray varnish. Be sure to hold the can 30cm away from the tile (otherwise you may disturb and spread the ink again), building up the varnish in very thin coats. Allow to dry fully.

7 Finally you need to make a soft backing for each tile. Lay them on to a piece of felt fabric and draw around each one with a pencil or tailor's chalk. Cut out the shapes and stick to the back of the coasters with an all-purpose strong glue.



Top Tip:

Either use the isopropyl alcohol sparingly to create small blotches, or completely cover the surface to create a thin wash of colour. Try tilting the tile vertically to create blurry colour washes, or alternatively do this very gently and slowly to create crisp edges.

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Window SHOPPING

Make a statement with Crittall's steel frame windows, and its ultra-modern HomelightPlus range

Crittall Windows has pioneered steel frame window manufacture for over 160 years. Everyone at the company understands how important it is to fit the right windows to the right home, and the firm stands at the forefront of twenty-first century window design. For Crittall, windows are the eyes of the home, and it's best to show them off.

A Crittall installation is always sensitive to the style of property, and to the needs of the owner. Too often an attractive property is downgraded as a result of its windows, sometimes to the point where it loses value on the property market. But the team at Crittall believe this to be an entirely avoidable situation, and boast an abundance of expertise to ensure that it doesn't happen to their clients.

The company's experts also know that a good-looking window isn't necessarily a cost-effective window, so they provide an optimum product and service in terms of energy efficiency. This is why the new HomelightPlus enhanced steel window strikes the perfect balance between great design and great performance, and ensures that fuel bills are kept down.

MARKET LEADER

The HomeLight range was first created during the 1920s, and has been perfected ever since to ensure that it remains a market leader. The new HomelightPlus window ensures maximum daylight with large glass areas, it's glazed up to 24mm, and it includes enhanced security features with a multi-point locking option. It is a window fit for the modern world, and for future generations as well. The quality-made, galvanised steel will last up to 60 years without rusting, and often even longer, and a resilient polyester powder coating ensures that redecoration isn't required for 25-30 years.

The slim, durable frame is versatile enough to suit a variety of styles, and visually impressive enough to enhance your home as well. It brings an elegance to any property and creates a welcoming sense of airiness and space. Though retaining Crittall's celebrated reputation for providing a strong, reliable product, the HomelightPluswindow inspires a delicate feel both inside and outside of a property.





HOT STUFF

Rest assured that the HomeLightPlus range is designed with year-round comfort in mind. The high performance double glazing works to retain heat during cold spells, and to regulate the temperature during hotter summer periods. Furthermore, with HomelightPlus installed in your home, you can expect a significant reduction in noise levels, making it even easier to relax in a warm, safe and quiet environment.

Crittall prides itself on providing a high-quality service from beginning to end. It offers unrivalled steel windows expertise, and it has perfected its designs and installation methods after more than a century and a half in the business. Its product is summarised by the company motto; 'British heritage, British quality, British made.' The company is proud to operate from Witham in Essex, and to provide for an international market.

When upgrading your widows accept no imitations. Crittall products are environmentally friendly, economical, reliable and competitively priced. And the HomelightPlus is their trailblazer for the 21st century. It won't let in draughts, it won't rust, it won't compromise the style of your property. It will complement and improve your home, and it will ensure maximum light, heat and comfort.

The window is available through Crittall's network of local Crittall Window specialists in 46 colours, plus a dual colour option. **For more information and an extensive look at further products available, call 01376 530 800 or visit crittall-windows.co.uk**



May issue

The next issue of Period Ideas is on sale from 24th March



Explore some fabulous florals at Voyage Maison. Flamestitch rug, priced from £238. 0141 641 1700, voyagemaison.co.uk

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Competitions and giveaways are open to all UK residents aged 18 or over, excluding employees or agents of the associated companies and their families. One entry per person. The prizes detailed in each competition/giveaway cannot be exchanged for goods, or towards the purchase of goods at any retail outlet. Postal entries must be on the coupon provided. Prizes cannot be exchanged for cash, or replaced if lost or damaged. Illegible entries and those that do not abide by these terms and conditions will be disqualified. Prizes must be taken as stated and cannot be deferred. The decision of the judge is final and no correspondence will be entered into. CLOSING DATE: 8th April 2016 (18th March 2016 for Cake International). Winners will be notified by phone, post or email. A list of winners will be available in writing on re quest from: Marketing Department, 21-23 Phoenix Court, Hawkins Road, Colchester, Essex CO2 8JY

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HOME HIGHLIGHTS FOR APRIL

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Make the most of your home with our Editor's pick of the latest products, ideas and expert advice



PICTURE PERFECT

The Country Stile stocks a wide range of affordable framed prints and canvases by popular artists. The selection includes land, sea and cityscapes, along with flora, animal and contemporary prints. This pretty design, Escape Plan, by Catherine Stephenson, is part of the new spring/summer range, and costs £35. **01507 525 871, thecountrystile.co.uk**

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Hand painted tea caddy table lamp, £719, Besselink & Jones
020 7351 4669, besselink.com

GET THE LOOK

Annie Sloan Chalk Paint is hosting a workshop at Wye Valley Reclamation on 23 March. Running from 10am until 1pm, you can learn how to achieve one- and two-colour aged looks and crackled paint. Tea, coffee and cake are available, as well as a 10% discount on Annie Sloan products. Tickets cost £65. **01432 361 689, wyevalleyreclamation.co.uk**



MARBLEOUS IDEA

The Tamara fireplace is a best-selling design by Montpellier Marble. It can be used with a free-standing basket or stove, as well as a cast-iron insert or high-efficiency cassette fire. It's available in two heights, including a 60" version. There are two marble finishes to choose from, including Bianco Persiano, pictured, priced from £2,790. **01242 582 777, montepellier.co.uk**

COME DANCING

The Australian Ballet is performing Swan Lake and Cinderella at the London Coliseum this July. Book now for a fortnight of spectacular family entertainment. Kicking off the visit from 13-16 July, Graeme Murphy's Swan Lake will breathe new life into this classic, while Alexei Ratmansky's Cinderella will be wowing audiences from 20-23 July. Tickets range from £15 to £75.

020 7845 9300, eno.org





TIMELESS CLASSIC

A Shaker-style kitchen never dates, making it a sound investment. Made from solid timber and sprayed in a choice of 24 colours, the Timeless range by Funktional Kitchens is constructed from oak with dovetail joints and soft closing systems. Traditional and contemporary-style handles and hinges are available, so you can customise the look. **020 8341 2020, funktionalkitchens.co.uk**



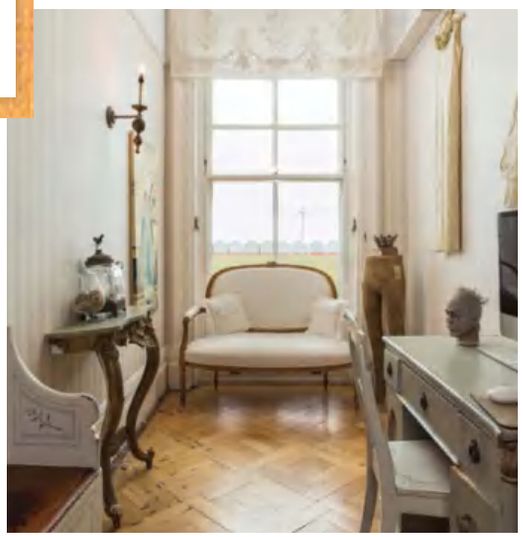
TAKE A SEAT

With its deep buttons, quilted back and distinctive rolling arms, the Chesterfield is a statement piece that will never go out of style. Sofa specialist, Delcor, offers this fine example, which is hand crafted and costs £1,976. The company, which was established in 1967, offers a 50-year guarantee on its frames. **0191 237 1303, delcor.co.uk**



WOODEN IT BE NICE

Finding furniture that suits an older period house can be tricky, but Stuart Interiors has plenty of choice on offer, including this handmade oak dining table, carved in the Renaissance style. The company also specialises in oak panelled rooms and staircases, as well as textiles and lighting. **01935 826 659, stuartinteriors.ltd.uk**



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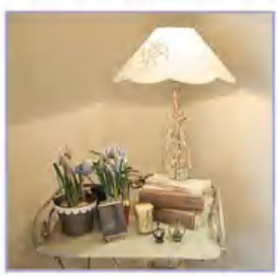


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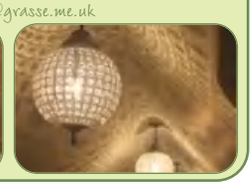
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KATE FAULKNER

LESSONS I'VE LEARNED

This month our expert spills the beans on the pros and cons of listed buildings

Edited by **SEAN HARRIS**



As you are reading *Period Ideas*, I'm sure you know that there is something very special about owning and renovating atmospheric period properties, but what if that property is listed? For me, that puts a whole new spin on things, especially when it comes to making changes.

The idea of listing buildings was mooted during the Second World War to determine which should be rebuilt in the event of bomb damage, and the first list was compiled in 1947.

Today the definition has changed and a building can be listed if it's considered by the Secretary of State to be of special architectural or historic interest. There are three classifications: Grade I, Grade II* and Grade II. This last category is the 'lowest' and is applied to the vast majority (92%) of listed buildings.

Due to the sheer volume of Victorian buildings surviving today, the criteria for being listed is pretty strict. The Victorian Society **(victoriansociety.org.uk)** details the criteria on its website and these include the property being an interesting work designed by a major architect, a rare survivor of a specific type, or forming part of an architecturally sensitive streetscape.

I know some people shy away from buying listed buildings, as they are concerned about red tape and restrictions. And it is true that, while you may be the owner of the house on paper, it is never truly 'yours'; you are merely the custodian of the building for the next generation and must seek permission from your local authority's conservation officer before making certain changes.

Before you buy, it's essential to check that any work carried out by previous owners had planning permission as it will be your responsibility to put things right once your name is on the deeds. Also, make sure you have a legal company that specialises in Listed property legals. If you are sure about what you want from a property but view the interventions of a conservation officer as interference rather than helping you protect the property's history for the future, then I would really think twice about whether a listed home is right for you.

Another issue with a listed property is that it is unlikely to be particularly energy efficient, unless it's renovated and this won't come cheap either. Expert builders will be required and they'll need to use original materials and have additional skill-sets to the average tradesman. Whether it's an old property or listed, I find it can be impossible to predict how much a project will cost, so I always recommend a 30% contingency – just in case. In the past, Listed Buildings benefited from some VAT relief, but unfortunately this was withdrawn on listed building renovations in 2012.

However, it's not all doom and gloom; there are advantages to owning a listed building. For a start, they are exempt from some rules and regulations. If you rent out your listed property, you won't need an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) and, from 2018 when it becomes illegal to rent out a property with a low EPC rating, this won't apply to listed buildings.

Another key benefit is that well maintained listed properties tend to be good at holding their value and attracting premium prices. This makes a listed building a potentially good financial investment if you buy it for a bargain price in poor condition and have the funds to do it up to a high standard, while remaining within regulations.

I do not have a listed property, but my home is 200 years old and made of stone and, although it is a constant battle to keep it maintained and looking good inside and out, I still love living in it. So if you are prepared to invest in preserving a piece of the past and if, like me, you love the history and mystery of old buildings, living in one can be a real privilege.

KATE FAULKNER katefaulkner.co.uk
If you need any help or advice on the ups and down of property ownership, do get in touch with Kate via **propertychecklists.co.uk**. She is one of the UK's leading residential property experts. She writes *Which? Property* books and regularly appears in the media.

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